

**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of

2006 Quadrennial Regulatory Review – Review of the
Commission’s Broadcast Ownership Rules and Other
Rules Adopted Pursuant to Section 202 of the
Telecommunications Act of 1996

MB Docket No. 06-121

2002 Biennial Regulatory Review – Review of the
Commission’s Broadcast Ownership Rules and Other
Rules Adopted Pursuant to Section 202 of the
Telecommunications Act of 1996

MB Docket No. 02-277

Cross-Ownership of Broadcast Stations and Newspapers

MM Docket No. 01-235

Rules and Policies Concerning Multiple Ownership of
Radio Broadcast Stations in Local Markets

MM Docket No. 01-317

Definition of Radio Markets

MM Docket No. 00-244

**COMMENTS OF RESIDENTS TESTIFYING AT COLUMBUS, OHIO
TOWN HALL MEETING SUBMITTED BY FREE PRESS**

On March 7, 2007 a “Town Meeting on the Future of Media” was held at the Broad Street Presbyterian Church in Columbus, Ohio. Community leaders and members of the public testified to Commissioners Copps, Adelstein, and McDowell with their intention of submitting these comments into the official record (06-121). Testimony is hereby submitted to the FCC to be placed in docket MB Docket No. 06-121.

SUMMARY

Free Press, Consumer's Union, Common Cause, United Church of Christ Office of Communications, Metropolitan Church Council, Ohio PIRG, and Ohio Citizen Action sponsored a town meeting on the future of media in Columbus, Ohio on March 7, 2007. Nearly 400 people attended the event, which took place at the Broad Street Presbyterian Church. The hearing featured opening remarks from FCC Commissioners Michael Copps, Johnathan Adelstein, and Robert McDowell, one panel, and a lengthy period for public testimony.

Anyone from the audience who wished to testify was allowed two minutes to address Commissioners Copps, Adelstein and McDowell about the media ownership rulemaking process underway at the FCC. Participants were informed that their public comments would be placed in the appropriate FCC docket and that they may hand in testimony if they did not wish to read it at the microphone. Testimony continued for nearly **four** hours – and comments were overwhelmingly opposed to increased media consolidation.

"I am concerned that only a few companies own most of the media," said 13-year-old Lucy Powell, a resident of Athens, Ohio. "This is my future, and I need to hear different viewpoints to know what is going on. Thank you for thinking about me and the rest of my generation as you make decisions on this important issue."

"When large companies take over local newspapers and radio and television stations, they strip the local news staff and package recycled news programming to the

community, making the kind of reporting I witnessed in my early days as a social worker shallow at best and non-existent at worst," said Alvin Hadley, executive director of the Columbus Metropolitan Area Church Council.

"I am here on behalf of the men and women who care deeply about their profession — in part because they care about our democracy," said panelist Connie Schultz, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist. "I mourn the changes in the media industry, but I am hopeful for the first time because hearings like this are happening all across the country. You, the FCC, have a chance to make it right, and we need you to make it right in Ohio."

The Columbus event was organized by Free Press, Consumers Union, Common Cause Ohio, United Church of Christ Office of Communications, Inc., Columbus Metropolitan Area Church Council, Ohio PIRG, Ohio Citizen Action, OK-Alliance, the Ohio/Kentucky Chapter of the Alliance for Community Media, Mid-Atlantic Community Papers Association, and Media Bridges.

A transcript of the public testimony given at the event is hereby submitted to FCC Secretary Marlene H. Dortch for inclusion in the official record of MB Docket No. 06-121.

JOSH SILVER: I'm Josh Silver, Director of Free Press, one of the organizations that has put this event together and is hosting it. Thank you so much for being here tonight. It is one of many public hearings on the future of media that have been held across the country, and it is exciting to see all these folks, and more I'm sure will filter in. I want to talk very briefly before we start about why this hearing is happening and why it's important. I am going to wager that you folks in this crowd are not here because media itself is an issue that you find to be the most engaging, important, captivating issue that you've ever come across in your life. But in all likelihood many of you have realized that it is an issue that deeply and profoundly affects every issue that you care about most. It doesn't matter whether you are concerned about your kids' education or your parents' health care or foreign policy. Everything is affected by the lens that media provides or in some cases don't provide, and so that's why I venture to guess why we're here tonight. Some of the decisions that are being made in the Congress and by the Federal Communications Commission are truly profound, issues of: Can a few massive companies own most of the media in this country? Can cable and phone companies put toll booths up on the Internet? Will public broadcasting be funded into the future and provide an alternative to commercial media, which is not always providing everything that we need to support our democracy? So these debates are important. They are often made quietly and without as much public debate as we think is needed, and that's why we've put together these hearings and that's why you're here. We have Republicans and Democrats here tonight and we're honored to have them, and I want to just note that these commissioners are real public servants in that they don't need to be here. They're not mandated to be here; they're doing it because they care deeply about this issue and

they understand the gravity of the decisions they're going to make. They're here because they truly want to know what you think about issues like media ownership and how the media are serving or not serving your communities, and after all the public airwaves do belong to you, and they understand that. Please remember tonight that while there are many issues that you may be concerned with these gentlemen to my right are here to receive your input on the crucial issue of media ownership, and as I say, how the media is or is not serving you. And I would ask that you try to keep your comments focused on media. The companies, the media industry lobbyists, make sure that they get a lot of airtime in Washington and a lot of face time with various policymakers and this is a unique opportunity for you to get that face time. I want to also recognize we have some state legislators and senators in the audience with us tonight, Representative Kathleen Chandler, who drove three hours to come here tonight to hear this hearing. I want to give her a round of applause. Three hours [*applause*]. Thank you so much for coming. And Senator Ray Miller, who I don't think is here yet, but at last notice he's very close and on his way. And we're going to take a moment for Representative Tracy Heard. This is her district here in Columbus, and she's going to come to the microphone to make some brief remarks. Please welcome Tracy Heard [*applause*]. That mic right there.

REPRESENTATIVE HEARD: Good evening. Please excuse my back. I first want to offer my apologies for being unable to stay for the entire forum this evening, but I will remain as long as my schedule will allow. Secondly, I must say that I'm encouraged to know that there's kind of interest, participation, and debate on such an important and timely subject. When WVKO fell silent I was truly disappointed that there was not a

louder outcry. I know there was reaction, response, and there was even a march. I'm disappointed that in the fifteenth largest city in this nation, the one twice voted best, and just this year falling to second best by BET as the best place for African Americans to live and raise a family has no Black locally owned radio or TV. That must not be part of their equation. It is imperative that we have ownership—preferably local ownership—in local media markets, because ownership speaks to perspective. Ownership speaks to representation. Ownership speaks to education, and ownership even speaks to economic development locally. We are already challenged with a lack of control of how we as a community are portrayed in the media. If we lose all access to ownership of media outlets, we will cease to have the ability to have any influence to how we are presented to the world, which message we send to the world, and what we consider to be important. Even though there are majority-owned stations that cater to African American communities, it is at their discretion the type of programming they offer. Locally we even have minority-owned but majority-operated stations. We may agree and be satisfied with their selections and determinations, but if we aren't? If that's all there is, then that's all there is. Even with the best intentions, not living as an African American in this world, it is not possible to be certain what we identify as important, positive, negative, or inconsequential is even accurate. Media consolidation works against the protection of all of the above. This issue is about more than profit margins. It is about maintaining the already tacit control we have of the development and presentation of our identity. The media is one of, if not the most powerful, entities on the planet. It determines what we think, what we know, how we perceive ourselves as individuals, what we do for entertainment, where we choose to live, how we spend our money, and most importantly,

what we know about and think of one another based on how that information is presented. That is why ownership is critical. I pray this evening will be only the beginning of a movement to protect that right of self-determining and stop the option of consolidation. Thank you. *[applause]*

JOSH SILVER: Thank you, Representative. I want to also acknowledge the folks who, the many great organizations and individuals, that have made this event possible. In addition to Free Press—our organization—Consumers Union; Common Cause Ohio; The United Church of Christ, Office of Communications; The Columbus Metropolitan Area Church Council; Ohio PIRG; Ohio Citizen Action, Okay Alliance; the Ohio/Kentucky Chapter of the Alliance for Community Media; The Mid-Atlantic Community Papers Association; and Media Bridges. I want to thank them, if we could just give them all a round of applause. *[applause]* Before I introduce the Commissioners I'll make one note. Commissioner Michael Copps is coming. His flight was delayed. It landed pretty much as I speak, and he will be getting over here in a taxi quickly and should be with us shortly. As I mentioned at the outset this is a bipartisan hearing, and I think it's really important to remind folks the extent to which this issue of media ownership is not a partisan issue. You'll recall that in 2003 it was on the right—the Christian Coalition, Parents Television Council, the National Rifle Association—all joined hands with liberal groups, like MoveOn and the ACLU and the National Organization for Women in opposing media consolidation. And it's really important to remember that when you look across the heartland in this country it is conservatives and liberals who are nearly universally opposed to media consolidation. We find at these hearings some 95% of comments are

against consolidation, and it transcends party lines. The only folks who try to propagate this myth that it's a partisan issue are the media companies themselves who are promoting consolidation and to some extent the media. So I just want to make sure that folks remember that, and what an honor it is to have this bipartisan participation tonight. First I'm going to introduce FCC Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein. He served at the FCC since December of 2004. Before he was there he served for fifteen years in the United States Senate. He has been very involved in the hearings that have been happening since 2002 on media ownership and the future of media, and I should note these hearings that the Commissioners have been tending to for the past four years have been a major factor in the rise of this issue of media in the minds of the public consciousness and the real spark that has ignited a movement for media reform across this country. Ladies and gentlemen, please help me in welcoming Representative Jonathan Adelstein, excuse me, FCC Commissioner. [*applause*]

COMMISSIONER ADELSTEIN: Well thank you and good evening everyone. It sure is nice to be in such a beautiful facility. Of all the hearings we've held—literally dozens across the country—perhaps the most beautiful setting that we've ever done it in, and appropriately so here in such a beautiful city. And it's a breath of fresh air to get out of Washington, DC and get here to Columbus, the great capital city of Ohio. We're really best served by getting out of Washington and learning what you think. As a lot of you know and you've heard, the Federal Communications Commission is in the process of reviewing all of its ownership rules. This whole issue is on the table, and our primary legal obligation—it says right in the law—is to promote your interest, to promote the

interests of the American public, the public interest. I really think that the best way for us to determine the public interest is to get out of our offices in Washington, visit local communities, and listen to what you have to say. And that's why we're here tonight. We're so honored that members of the state legislature would be here, such a fantastic array of public interest groups have been involved in pulling this together, and of course I'd like to thank the Broad Street Presbyterian Church for making this special place of worship available to us. I'm also grateful to the outstanding panelists. I know we're going to hear from some of the leading lights of Ohio and of Columbus about this issue tonight and their experiences. Perhaps most importantly I'd like to thank all of you for coming out on a busy night. So many of you have other demands on your lives but you understand the importance of this, and you came out to share your experiences with us. Public forums like this are real testaments to the strength of our democracy, which as President Roosevelt said, is not a spectator sport. It's a participatory sport and you're all here tonight participating, so thank you for that. I'm here tonight to ask: Are you happy with the media here in Columbus? [*shouts of disapproval from audience*]. Now we got an initial read on it. I'd like more detail as the evening goes on. We will sit here and listen to each and every one of you as you go on and... [*laughter*] Okay, raise your hands if you're unhappy with the media in Columbus. [*unintelligible*] It is overwhelming and I'm sorry to hear that because I'm really hoping that we can talk about ways that we can make the media more accountable, more responsive to make you feel that your views are being represented, that there's a diversity of viewpoints that you have to choose from. We're here after all because the airwaves belong to you the American people, not the media giants that use them and seek to profit by them, but they are supposed to in return

serve your interests, and your presence here today and your initial vote reflects how important you see this issue as being to your own democracy, to your cultural life, and your way of life here in Columbus. It's about what you see, what you hear, and what you read, and I think decisions about your local media shouldn't be made in New York or Los Angeles or even Washington, DC. They should be made right here in Columbus, Ohio. The founding fathers and the framers of the constitution taught us that freedom and democracy don't come easy in this country or anywhere else for that matter as we are seeing. The price of freedom is eternal vigilance, as Thomas Jefferson said, and the price of meaningful media reform and media democracy is also eternal vigilance. And that's why I thank you all for being so vigilant by being here on the ramparts tonight. Coming from Washington, DC we hear a lot of talk about promoting freedom and democracy around the world, but what about improving the quality of freedom and democracy right here in America, right here in Ohio, right here in Columbus? *[applause]* I think central to the idea of American democracy is what the Supreme Court called the "uninhibited marketplace of ideas", where everyone is able to exchange views and hear different kinds of music, get information and entertainment programming over the public airwaves, and the Supreme Court said it's your right to hear diverse viewpoints. That right is enshrined in the First Amendment to the US constitution. I think that we as Americans deserve quality local music, public affairs information, and information that you need to help you decide issues when it comes election time. Families deserve meaningful entertainment programming options on free over-the-air television, and local musicians and artists deserve to have their music played on local radio during times when people can actually hear them. Now we're on the verge, you might have heard, of an historic agreement on

payola that I hope will help restore part of the airwaves to local and independent artists. And this was achieved with the active leadership of our Chairman Kevin Martin, and it makes me optimistic for the future that we can work together in this way to improve the airwaves, because we all know that broadcast radio and television have a powerful influence over our culture, our political system, and the ideas that inform our public discourse. Study after study has shown that broadcasting is still the dominant source of not just local news and information, but also entertainment programming. We hear a lot about the Internet and all these different opportunities for iPods and other things, but people still get their local news and information from the same place they always have according to all these studies—local television stations, newspaper, and, to a lesser extent, the radio stations. So this is where the debate, the discourse, and the free exchange of ideas is taking place, and it's so essential to our participatory democracy that that debate be one that involves a diversity of viewpoints. When you look at today's national broadcast media landscape you see hyper-commercialism, rampant homogenization, and unforgivable lack of women and minority ownership and employment and participation in the media. *[applause]* Nationally women make up over half the US population but yet they own less than 5% of all TV stations. Minority groups own less than 3.3% of all TV stations, even though they represent a third of the population. So fewer media companies are gaining more and more control over the means of distributing ideas, and that means fewer small entrepreneurs, fewer women, fewer minorities can use the public airwaves to contribute to our national experience and our national dialog. That's a tragedy in a country where diversity is really our strength and our opportunity for greatness. Women and other groups deserve not just to be consumers of broadcast media services but

owners. And all communities deserve to be covered on the evening news and have issues of concern reported in a thoughtful manner. [applause] I'm already getting a sense from you as I have as I've gone across the country that we hear that local newscasts are dominated by sensationalism and crime stories, little useful information, and even less government and election information that people can use to make thoughtful decisions in a democracy. [applause] And I just heard about it here beforehand talking to some people from the community about how local media are cutting news staff, requiring fewer writers, reporters, and producers to more with less, and as a result there's no way around it: news quality suffers. And we're herein a capital city where the people's representatives are everyday debating, and the question is: Do the people have their own tribunes in the form of the media there watching them? In numbers to make sure that they're accountable, that every move and decision that they make on behalf of the people is adequately represented. As we see fewer and fewer reporters chasing bigger and bigger stories that's not happening. It's getting worse. It's getting worse in capitals across the country. I want to hear what's happening here in Columbus, if you think it's getting better or worse. Because what I hear as I go across the country—and let me know if it's true here—is in the news we see “if it bleeds, it leads”. Now that might be good for ratings, but it's the [unintelligible] blood of our democracy that bleeds when the positive aspects of our communities aren't covered. When in-coverage of local and national elections disappear, that when real investigative journalism is replaced with video news releases. One study found for example that nationally community public affairs programming accounted for less than one-half of 1% of TV programming, compared to 14.4% of paid programming like infomercials for ab crunchers. So we may be getting

tighter abs, but we're also probably getting a flabby democracy. *[applause]* So the question before us today and the question we want to hear from you is: What is the impact of consolidation of ownership on the media coverage in this community and in surrounding communities? I've got a special concern, as I said, about state government because until recently my own father in the state legislature in my home state of South Dakota, and it just is a concern out there and it's a concern everywhere that we go. And so we need to hear the perspectives of this capital about what's happening here in Ohio, because television and radio stations are served in this country to serve individual communities. They're licensed to Columbus and there's supposed to be outlets for local expression, local artists, and local news and information. The public deserves and the law requires programming that serves the unique needs of local communities. The strength of this country is diversity and its freedom, and I think the FCC needs to work toward strengthening our democracy and creating more opportunities for entrepreneurs to achieve a greater state in broadcasting management, and especially in ownership. Each of you is part of this national dialog tonight and I can't emphasize enough how grateful I am and the importance of your being here and participating. If we're going to craft media ownership rules that best serve the public interest, we've got to hear from the public. We've got to hear from you and that's why we're here to listen. So thank you so much for being here and sharing with us. *[applause]*

[testimony missing] If the FCC lifts the ownership cap currently under review, I fear for the very few remaining news media outlets that address issues of importance to communities of color here in Columbus. Given the continuing decline in the number of

minority media owners, it is time for renewed examination and public debate about the impact of media concentration, and the importance of minority ownership to localism, diversity, and universal service. Policymakers, legislators, and media industry in both the private and public sectors need to think anew about which tools and methods will effectively increase minority participation in the broadcast and telecommunications industries. I submit that diversity of ownership provides for multicultural experience and awareness and help focus issues of importance to individual communities. The FCC should not consider a line lifting ownership caps and increasing media consolidation until they have evened the playing field to allow more people of color to own and operate local news outlets. And in conclusion I wish to thank the Commission for this opportunity to provide input on issues relating to the future of media. Thank you. [*applause*]

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you. Our next panelist is Connie Shultz, who is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist from the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

CONNIE SCHULTZ: Commissioners, thank you for being here today. Thank you for the bipartisan effort, because as you know democracy is a bipartisan effort, and I'm grateful to you for showing up here today on such an important issue. I hail from Cleveland. I hail from the newspaper guild—CWA—so I'm here as a union member. I'm also here as a member of the mainstream media. I'm here on behalf of the men and the women who have not taken the buyouts, who have not succumbed to layoffs, who have not voluntarily left our profession, but are continuing to do the daily work of reporting the news because they care deeply about this profession, in part because they care deeply about democracy.

I want to tell you what it looked like to be a reporter ten, fifteen years ago for me. I used to worry about TV showing up on stories I was covering. I used to constantly monitor the radio stations. I used to worry about what the other newspapers in the area were going to do. I don't worry about that anymore. Any story that involves any bit of investigation I'm pretty much on my own. And I'm lucky to do that because I'm a columnist now, and not at the whim of editors. I recall a big story four or five years ago in Cleveland when a stockbroker absconded with millions of dollars in personal funds of clients, and we were covering a particular hearing, and a TV reporter showed up, and he didn't even know why he was there and what the hearing's about because he had just gotten diverted. And I actually gave him a copy of the pleadings, because I just thought we can't do this business like this. And this was a direct result of mergers and cutbacks, and all these profit margins that they want to keep growing and growing and what shrinks is your news coverage. Last year I took a leave of absence for almost the entire year from my job because my husband Sherrod Brown ran for the US Senate. And so I got to see firsthand what coverage was like all around the state of Ohio. And it broke my heart because I'm a journalist first. And so many times reporters would tell me I would not see them down the road at a particular event, a particular issue that was coming up because they weren't going to be sent. They weren't going to be able to afford the travel. One of the biggest differences I saw this year, because of consolidation and cutting of staff, is when political ads run. One of the things we count on in our profession is we analyze content of ads, and every, every candidate should be held to the same standard. And when that doesn't happen, and repeatedly different newspapers were telling us they couldn't do it because they didn't have staff anymore to do it, that's your only check on accuracy anymore. That

is the only check for the voters of the state, and it was missing much of the time during the campaign. When you cut staff you start running a lot of wire stories in my business. I recall in 2004 there was an Associated Press story, high during the election campaign, the presidential race, and this reporter wrote a story citing this man as a family expert who said that deliberately childless couples were hurting the moral fabric of our country. Well I saw that as really a flash word: What's this "deliberately childless" about? So I actually researched him a little bit and it turned out he also thought—he worked for a particular think tank—and he thought that women should not have jobs once they have children. And if their first job was to have children then they should be home, but interestingly after I interviewed him, his wife was now working because they couldn't quite make ends meet. Now that is a really different story, and he should not have been cited unconditionally as an expert in more than a hundred papers in the country. The only reason I had the leverage to look into it is I was a columnist, and not a reporter trying to persuade an editor to let me do my job. When I think now about the Walter Reed series that just ran by Dana Priest and Ann Hall, what a spectacular piece of reporting. [applause] But here's what we know in too many newspapers across the country and what we've been talking about in Web chats and on pointer.org's Web site, Jim Romanensko's Web site. I hope you look at least occasionally because that's where you hear mainstream media weighing in from reporters talking about how they wish they could do their job. It is so unlikely that most papers would have devoted four months and two reporters to one story. And look what is happening because of the Walter Reed coverage. So I mourn the changes, but I am hopeful for the first time in a while, because you're having these hearings all around the country, and you're actually listening. And I remind you of what's

happening in nearby Youngstown as I speak. We cannot any further erosion of our local voice in the source of information, and I wrote this down so I don't get it wrong [*laughs*]. For example, an entrepreneur out of Los Angeles has proposed to purchase local Youngstown television station WYTV. In the FCC filing for the purchase he proposes to set up a joint operation with another Youngstown television station. If this sale is approved and the two newsrooms are combined, the Youngstown market will be reduced in journalistic eyes and ears and everyone is going to suffer. It's happening all around the country and it's happening in Ohio and you can stop it. Thank you. [*applause*]

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you. Our next panelist is Percy Squire, former owner of WVKO-AM.

PERCY SQUIRE: Thank you very much. I hope you can hear me. I think we might be a little short on cords. At any rate I'll do the best that I can with the limited amount of cord that we have. I would state at the outset that I too would like to express my gratitude to Free Press and Common Cause and the other groups that have set up this proceeding this evening, and I'm particularly gratified by the presence of three Commissioners from the FCC. I have been involved for the past twelve or thirteen years—actually a little more than that—fifteen, in attempting to become involved in media ownership. I was a shareholder in a company based in Youngstown, Ohio that owns five radio stations—two in Columbus and three in Youngstown. So I'm quite familiar with the environment to which Miss Shultz made reference and also to the factors discussed by Mr. Hadley. I would say to you at the outset that my comments here will be limited. We are on a tight

time schedule, but I'm mindful of the fact that we're in a church and I'm sitting here in the pulpit. So I won't lie or use any profanity. I know the maximum effective range of a lightning bolt, but I will try to impart to you some of our experiences over the past few years in struggling to remain participants, at least in the ownership arena. It's been my experience that notwithstanding these policy issues concerning caps on ownership and the like that the FCC has to wrestle with, there is a tension between democracy and capitalism that plays very heavily into this ownership equation. [applause] That is to say that notwithstanding whatever policies or regulations are established, if you don't access, or you aren't independently wealthy or a trust fund baby or something like that you can't own media. So you have to be able to buy. This is a question of capital or dollars. The manner that consolidation or a change in the ownership cap has affected access to capital is that it's influenced decision making within financial institutions. And what I mean by that is the people who decide which organizations they're going to back, who capital will be loaned to are looking at the realities of the marketplace that we have to operate in, and if you have a company such as our company, relatively inexperienced, that was a startup or was seeking to participate in an environment dominated by mega-companies, publicly traded companies and the like, the reality is it's recognized by these financial decision makers that it is going to be difficult for companies such as ours to compete. When decisions are made by advertisers concerning which media they're going to place buys with and the like, they are going to do these things based upon what makes sense for them. The publicly traded companies are looking to make sure that their organizations are responding to the needs of their shareholders. They want their stock to be valuable. They want their stock to trade in a way that Wall Street and the other financial entities will

continue to back them. So they're going to take whatever steps are necessary to assure that they generate a profit, and if that means they have to engage in practices that undercut the smaller companies, that can't operate in the manner that they do they've got a motive to do so. So the consolidation question bears a direct relationship on who gets access to capital. Without access to capital it's not going to be possible for Blacks and other minorities to participate in the ownership arena. On the other hand you have to contend with the reality that even once you obtain ownership that if you are going to be responsible to the needs of democracy, free speech trying to provide local coverage and the like, you aren't going to be able to use the kind of cost-cutting and expense control mechanisms that some of the larger companies use, such as voice tracking, such as eliminating middle management, such as eliminating news staffs and the like. If you want to focus the number of resources on your mission that you need to in order to be realistic and to provide coverage of these local issues, then it requires you to spend more money and to hire more staff, and this again affects your bottom line. So these are things that I would suggest have to be borne in mind as the Commission goes about its rule-making. The impact of these rules on how financial decision makers are going to decide who gets access to capital. The other thing I that I would suggest that the decision makers should pay close attention to is the fact that in this environment, where access to capital is governed by who it is that the decision makers believe can be successful, there's an environment that's been created that is right for predatory or sub-prime lenders, and they'll come in, focus on distressed companies. I won't go into great detail concerning the specifics of what happened to WVKO here in Columbus or to other stations up in Youngstown, but having to contend with predatory lenders was a big factor. The reason I

won't go into detail is not because I don't wish to inform you of it. It's simply because we have active proceedings pending before the FCC, and there are limitations on how much specifics we can get into given the fact that we do have active applications being considered as I speak. I would just suggest to the Commissioners a few of the following points. I would suggest that the FCC consider policies similar to the Department of Treasury and the Department of Housing and Urban Development with respect to being on the lookout for predatory lenders in connection with whether or not they approve applications to transfer, in particular applications that come to them in the involuntary transfer setting. I would suggest that they perhaps flag transactions that involve minority-owned companies so that they go beyond the normal administrative process and don't simply accept staff recommendations based upon filings that have been lodged with the FCC, but that they actually conduct and designate these matters for hearing. [unintelligible] timekeeper? Okay, I'll wrap this up. The bottom line is that minority owners find themselves in a Catch 22. They want to be responsive but on the other hand they have to be credit-worthy and they have to show an ability to make a profit. And the FCC's policies in this connection have a direct response to our ability to do so. Just in the interest of time I'll bring my remarks to a close but for those of you in the audience that are interested I would just say in closing, whether you're here because of your interest of what's going on with our stations in Youngstown or our stations in Columbus, I want you to be assured that the battle is not over and that we will continue in this fight. Thank you. [applause]

CHRIS CLOAK: Our next panelist is Ann B. Walker, former Assistant News Director at WVKO and reporter for WCMH TV.

ANN WALKER: I too want to join those who have welcomed the Commissioners and all of you who are in the audience because your presence indicates a concern about what is happening in Columbus with the media. My role here apparently is to share with you what has happened as well as what is happening. When I moved from print to radio in 1962 there were a number of local stations in this community. Listeners could count on a station, if not all of them, covering issues of importance to them. Five years later when I moved to television with the AVKO Broadcasting Company there were regulations that limited multiple ownership. AVKO for instance owned four television stations and seven radio stations. I worked for Channel 4 in the Columbus area. As an administrator one of my responsibilities was to prepare the license renewal application, and in that application we always had to indicate the percentage of time we gave to community service coverage, as well as to news and other programming. One year when community groups were on our back we realized that we had to develop community service shows, and so in Dayton we set up the Phil Donahue show, in Cincinnati we set up the Nick Clooney show, and here in Columbus I did Focus on Columbus. And I dare say there's some of you in the community sitting in the audience who've participated on that show. [applause] Today Channel 4, Channel 6, Channel 10, Channel 8—none of the stations carry that kind of programming that we did then. I also produced Mark of Jazz, which was an opportunity for Black musicians particularly to be exposed, to have exposure, that kind could not get gigs in the Columbus community like the white musicians, and so we

had Mark of Jazz and I hired a hip, young man who hosted this show, and I had a chance as a result of that program to meet people like Count Basie and Thelonius Monk among others. Today the only jazz program that includes interviews that I am aware of is the one that Fritz Perloom does on radio, and he's been doing that show now for about twenty some years. I went on recruitment trips for AVKO broadcasting to various Black college campuses, preaching to young students that they too could participate in the media. They can be on camera. They can be behind the camera. They could even own stations. At first they didn't believe me, and then they began to buy the story. And so they pooled their resources and began to buy stations. Some other owners who wanted to keep their finger in the pie developed partnerships with Blacks. They would sell them so many shares and they would become part owner of a station. That happened locally here. I remember that as a part of that kind of exposure I was a panelist and when I first met Jimmy candidate, and even though it may sound biased, even today I'm proud of the fact that he paid me a complement in saying that my questioning skills were superb in comparison to the four men who were on the panel. *[laughter]* *[applause]* I never asked him a question about Hubert Humphrey. When the class of women was added to the definition of minority, then efforts by Blacks to purchase stations became hazardous. There were two people in this community who wanted to buy stations when two licenses became available. One was Horace Perkins, and the other was Ann Lawson Walker. We were worked hard. We lobbied. We had the big shots in Washington to work on our behalf. And I was disappointed one morning when my attorney called me to say that the license I had applied for was given to a saleswoman at *[unintelligible]* station. Horace persevered and he finally got his license and bought his station, and after holding it for a number of years

he sold it. Today it is one woman's opinion that the local news coverage is less than adequate. Let me just tell you why. Seven years ago Madam Ruth Perry was appointed the Interim President of Liberia. She was coming to Columbus. I was asked to arrange press. When I called station after station, newspaper after newspaper, they said "we're not interested in talking heads". But they sure gave a lot of coverage to cats that were treed and had to be rescued by firemen. Last year the Columbus Ghana Council had the ambassador here. I was asked to arrange press again. When I tried to do so with all the stations, with the newspaper, they said once again "we're not interested". And I thought well maybe because the staff is young and they don't have a balanced education, they don't understand the significance of people like that coming to this community. Let's spring forward to August 2006. A Congressman decided at the last minute he's going to run for the governorship of Ohio. He approached the King Lincoln Brownsville neighborhood association. They came to me and said can you arrange a meeting, a reception, and press. Once again I tried. I arranged a meeting, held at Bethany Presbyterian Church. I arranged a reception. That was no problem. They arranged a tour. That was no problem. But the press didn't know who he was, so they weren't interested. Today that former Congressman is the Governor of Ohio, and between the time they realized that and he won much of the news that was carried was regurgitated material. To change the regulations governing ownership of media outlets means that we're going to lose the spotlight on what is happening and who is doing it. It means that we're going to lose the teachable moments of educating citizens, the ability to deal with controversial issues that independence grants, and the empowerment of citizens that comes from knowledge and general community service coverage. Regulations must be tightened

rather than changed. A media giant is not going to serve the best interests of Columbus, Ohio. Mr. Commissioners, we have got to move forward rather than backwards. Thank you. [*applause*]

CHRIS CLOAK: Our next panelist is Gilbert Price, the Senior Editor of Columbus Call and Post.

GILBERT PRICE: Thank you. Recently a study by bet.com named Columbus the second best city in America for African American families, tied with Washington, DC, trailing only Charlotte. Pointing to the community's low crime rate, its economic opportunity for African Americans, its diverse political, cultural, and social leadership. The same source did the study in 2004 and Columbus that year actually topped the list. This is a city that today, despite the fact that the city is only 25% African American, the mayor is African American, as are a majority of the City Council, 5-2 majority of the Board of Education, the Superintendent of schools, the Police Chief, the Fire Chief, and the President of the local united Way. It's a place where African Americans are moving into positions of corporate leadership and where locally owned companies are bringing African Americans onto their boards of directors. We do not believe this is an accident. Columbus is certainly not perfect, but it has opened remarkably since the time I was a child and a young man. Columbus is a city where in the lifetime of some quite possibly in this audience there was almost no opportunity for African Americans to join the city's police force or fire department, where African Americans complained vigorously about how they were treated by police, including not only the beatings, but the frequent shootings of

African Americans. African Americans were seldom appointed as judges or members of City Council, and if they were they were swiftly defeated. Few African Americans held positions of any consequence in the city's corporations. African Americans could not join many of the construction unions in the city, even when they had the skills. They were not employed by the banks or other major institutions in the corporate world. If they were able to start a business their opportunities were largely limited to selling their products or services to other African Americans. Most of the major institutions in the city, both public and private, were unavailable to them. The changes in this community were accomplished through a number of means, including lawsuits against the School Board, against the police, and others. But there was also a strong Black media presence. It involved a Black media that agitated for change, that constantly raised issues of equity and inclusion, that publicized the battles being waged by individuals and groups against the racial unfairness of the times, that pressed for political representation in both parties. The Call and Post, at the time the only African American newspaper in Columbus, led the charge to protest police brutality when a number of white police officers were charged brutalizing or killing African Americans. There are many in this audience today who remember the pictures that would fill the front page of the Call and Post of individuals who had been the victims of police brutality. The Call and Post covered the brewing battles over school segregation from the standpoint of those who had been its victims. It covered the suits of African Americans seeking to be hired by the police and fire departments from the perspective of those who had been locked out. It has covered the travails of African Americans who have attempted to gain contracts for construction of the city's schools. In fact an article on that subject will be the lead story when the

newspaper appears tomorrow. WVKO radio was also a participant in that struggle. Most of us in this audience under 50 can recall the work—or over 50—can recall the work that Les Brown did in mobilizing African American voters to vote, turning up the heat on the Columbus division of police when several African Americans were beaten by police when they were arrested at the Kahiki restaurant. Some of us remember that Les was actually fired by WVKO, which at the time was white-owned, because of his vocal activism on the subject, and that later was elected to the Ohio House of Representatives in large of measure because of his very public advocacy on behalf of African Americans. It is also important to note that this type of activism, this type of aggressive advocacy for the interests of minorities, was being done with little meaningful help from the white Columbus media community. To my knowledge there has never been an African American chief editor, section editor, or columnist at Columbus' largest newspaper. To my knowledge, other than some individuals at the city's public radio and television stations, there have been few—there have been some but very few—African Americans in leadership or key news roles in the area radio and television stations. On television each local station has had African Americans in key on-air positions over the past three decades, but that has not resulted in the type of journalism that has uncovered, or addressed allegations of discrimination or unfair treatment of African Americans because of their race, or pushed for inclusion. In fact only just recently, only a few, literally a few days ago, I had to call the local television station, WCMH TV, at 6:00 in the morning to question why a television reporter had mentioned the race of two alleged criminal suspects, without mentioning any other identifiers which would have helped the public to turn in the alleged criminals. Sadly we are still subjected to this type of journalism in

Columbus. The reality is that Columbus news media have not helped lead the inclusion of African Americans into the mainstream of Columbus life. In fact they have trailed in that inclusion. That's why this hearing is so important. We're living in an age of media consolidation and expansion that is reducing, if not destroying, the ability of these smaller voices to have the type of impact that the Call and Post and WVKO have had in times past. Of the approximately 12,000 radio stations in the United States, only about 160, about 1.3%, are in the hands of African American owned or controlled institutions. In an age when stations are changing their formats like individuals change their socks, committed African American ownership is probably the best way to ensure that the voices of African Americans and the issues about which they are concerned are heard in the media. what is important to me is the impact on the public discourse and on the ability entities to impact our society by giving those in all communities a voice on the critical issues of the day. We recognize we are in a politically polarized society. We've seen two presidential elections in seven years in which we have elected a president with less than a majority of the popular vote, and re-elected him in a sharply divided electorate. Yet as the rules have changed to allow greater media concentration than has been in the past we are seeing entities creating national companies with as many as 1,200 radio stations, often owning more than one radio stations—sometimes four or five or more—in one market, effectively monopolizing in one corporate entity what listeners will hear in the marketplace. The argument of course is that those who disagree can purchase their own microphone. But there is obviously a difference between buying a microphone and purchasing bandwidth. The wealth it takes to purchase bandwidth leaves not only millions of voices, but many different points of view out, and all of us in society are poor

for it. In Columbus WVKO was the station with a perspective. Its owner, Percy Squire, has been committed to operating a radio station that focused on issues and concerns important to the African American community. WVKO continued this tradition of being a community voice by becoming one of the few Black talk radio formats in the nation. When I was doing my own program on WVKO we would get listeners as far away as Nebraska who would listen to us on the Internet. Some may argue that even with the loss of WVKO there are other radio stations in the Columbus market that meet the needs of the African American community. But there was none that fulfilled the unique format role that Percy Squire attempted to carve out, and there was none that had the long more than 50 year history of public advocacy and service that WVKO had. *[applause]* FCC policies that expand opportunities for cross-ownership and make it easier for media companies to dominate single markets do a tremendous disservice to the listening public and to democracy itself. If the bandwidth is, as has been the theory of regulation, a public trust, it does not simply belong only to those individuals and powerful corporate entities that have the power to purchase it. I would urge the FCC to reconsider the direction it's been going. While this direction does not have a direct impact on the Call and Post, it most certainly will have an impact on the environment in which our institution and the constituents we serve must operate. Thank you for your consideration. *[applause]*

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you. We have two more panelists and I will continue to walk up on you as your time closes. Our next panelist is Catherine Tercer, who is the Legislative Director for Ohio Citizen Action.

CATHERINE TERCER: Thank you again for this opportunity to speak with you all today. Ohio Citizen Action has been around since 1975. We're primarily an environmental group, but we also function as a government watchdog. Since 1992 the Ohio Citizen Action Education Fund has been producing money and politics studies, and really closely following elections. We're part of the Midwest Democracy Network, and I will begin my comments. As everyone acknowledges the government provides broadcasters free and exclusive access to a portion of the public airwaves as long as the broadcaster serves the public interest. Political campaigns based on free and open exchange of ideas are the essence of democracy. Broadcasters have a unique obligation as stewards of the most important medium for political communication in our society to provide forums in which candidates discuss and debate issues during the campaign season. Since the beginning of modern broadcasting the FCC has regarded that public interest as including the use of TV to develop an informed public opinion through the dissemination of news and ideas concerning the vital issues of today. Certainly an informed public opinion is most urgently needed at an election time. Local television news is an ideal place to fulfill this obligation. It's a block of time already set aside for disseminating information and it already has a sizable viewing audience. Overall local television news continues to dominate the media landscape. According to the Pew Research for People and the Press a majority of Americans—59%—say that they regularly watch the local news in their area. The Pew Internet and American Life project polled Americans right after election 2006 and discovered that over 2/3 of those polled—69%—said that they get most of their political news from television. 69% get most of their political news from television. Unfortunately, on close examination, here in Ohio

the biggest portion of that local news programming is devoted to sports and the weather. [laughter] In the 60 days preceding election 2006 the University of Wisconsin at Madison—they have a news lab there—they examined news programming in nine Midwest media markets, basically comprising [sic] 10% of the nation's population. So we're talking about 10% of the nation's population. I'll focus on Columbus and Cleveland as I talk about much of this, and let me know if I'm going too quickly. The Midwest News Index is a project of the Midwest Democracy Network. In Ohio the News Lab examined Columbus' evening and late-night local broadcast. They identified the amount of time devoted to different types of programming and the type of election coverage. So we're talking about the period of 60 days or two months before election 2006. In Columbus, during that 60 days before the election, the largest block of time, ten and a half minutes of the average 30 minute broadcast, was devoted to advertising. Naturally much of this advertising was political advertising. Sports and weather were second, clocking in at seven and a half minutes, and in fact teasers, intros were allotted more time than election coverage. They actually rated two minutes. Local newscasts devoted a whopping minute and a half for thirty minutes to election coverage during this time period. The University of Wisconsin News Lab discovered that most of the election coverage—60%, a majority—was devoted to the horse race. Okay, whose ahead, what's going on, how are things looking, whose ahead in the polls, rather than hearing directly from candidates, or identifying how candidates actually differ from one another on specific issues. And believe it or not, 13% of the total time allotted to election coverage was actually a discussion of the advertisements themselves, how horrible they were, what was going on. So the discussion actually took place during the news. The one place on

TV that people could, I don't know, reasonably expect to find local election information is on the local news. But local elections which directly impact the daily lives of viewers received only 4% of total election coverage in Columbus. 4% of one and a half minutes is 3.6 seconds. *[audience comment unintelligible]* Now consolidation of media means more and more news coming out of Washington. We need to remember that even with strong newspapers and the ever-expanding information available on the Internet most folks still get their news from local broadcasts. Television simply needs to be more locally focused. It seems that the principle way that broadcasters help develop an informed public opinion about candidates for political office is by selling them huge amounts of advertising time. Bear, Stearns & Company estimated that by election day 2008 a record 2.5 billion dollars will have been spent by presidential and federal candidates on television advertisements, because they have to. Unfortunately as we all now political advertisement is the worst kind of information with which to make an informed decision on election day, and is hardly a step toward fulfilling broadcasters' obligations to the public. *[applause]* Okay I'm sorry. The applause doesn't count in my time, does it? *[laughter]* The point is right now that local broadcasters can do oh, so much better. Unfortunately under further consolidation there would be little reason to expect any type of improvement. Consolidation reduces locally oriented content. Viewers deserve good election coverage and public policy discussions. With consolidation competition decreases, and improvements are increasingly important to viewers. More further consolidation—I'm worried about the time, sorry. Before further consolidation can even be considered the FCC needs to take the renewal of broadcast licenses more seriously. *[applause]* I'm almost done. The FCC needs to closely review whether or not these broadcasters are

meeting their public interest obligations and whether or not they actually deserve to continue to have a license. Thank you very much. [*applause*]

CHRIS CLOAK: Our last panelist is Robert Chase, the Director of Communication for United Church of Christ.

ROBERT CHASE: I wish to thank the Commissioners Copps, Adelstein, and McDowell for their presence here tonight, and for bringing a listening ear to the State of Ohio. I'd also like to thank all of you, members of the public, for showing that you understand how much media matters, and for your efforts in holding those who shape our media accountable to the public interest. Before beginning my remarks I want to express appreciation for comments made by Chairman Martin in a recent interview with the New York Times, where he announced a record-setting settlement based on the United Church of Christ's petition opposing Univision's FCC license renewal because of its failure to apply with mandated standards of educational children's programming. We hope this action sends a signal to all broadcasters that they must serve our children in accord with federal law, and we look forward to seeing the FCC's order and to future enforcement actions. These events are a direct result of efforts by a handful of concerned parents from right here in Ohio. United Church of Christ members from La Iglesia Unidad de Cristo Buenas Nuevas, a small UCC congregation in Cleveland, monitored the programs and filed the petitions in this case. So public involvement in these issues can make a difference. [*applause*] Imagine a world where eligible voters were actually informed about the issues of the day. [*laughter*] Imagine a world where we saw one another as

individuals and not stereotypes, so barriers could be broken and communication across culture [applause] and religion and classes could happen effortlessly. Imagine a world where children found quality education at their fingertips and adults used financial and creative resources to develop new and innovative ways to inform and inspire our kids. Imagine a world where people learned about the complexities of our environment, and discovered ways to reclaim what we have already stripped from our earth and skies. Imagine a world. [applause] I'm often asked why a church should be involved with media policy, and I begin my answer with an old African proverb. "Until the lions can tell their own story, tales from the hunt will always glorify the hunter". [applause] Echoing Tip O'Neill's famous line that all politics are local, the fundamental building blocks of ministry for faith groups lie in local congregations, grounded in local culture, experience, and issues. It is wrong to assume that there is a monolithic religious voice that one size fits all. [applause] So when media becomes increasingly owned and operated by a small, distant elite, there is a disconnect with local folk. [applause] Now we've already heard statistics tonight from my esteemed colleagues and from the Commissioners themselves about consolidation and its effect on people of color and women in terms of ownership. But there's one fact that I haven't heard mentioned yet and it is startling to me. As I read the comprehensive report developed by Free Press on the statistics of ownership in this country I learned that there were only 44 TV stations across this country, or 3.26% of them, that are owned by people of color, and that as I read their report none of them are in the State of Ohio. [applause] Our defense of the public interest on behalf of women and people of color in the UCC grows out of our historic commitment to civil rights, but tonight I want to cite three quick examples of how media consolidation has silenced the

voices of people of faith. These illustrations serve as an example of why I implore the Commissioners to hold the line on regulatory policy that further consolidates media ownership. First, in the Phoenix area an interfaith group of more than 150 clergy were anxious to combat the often hate-filled diatribe of the religious right seeking to proclaim how such angry voices of exclusion were opposed to their understanding of God's love. The Arizona ministers formed a group called No Longer Silent, but found that their message of unconditional love was a harder sell than the one of hate. They tried to rent billboard space in Phoenix to assert that God loves everyone, including by implication gay and lesbian persons. But Clear Channel and Viacom who own virtually all the billboards in the Phoenix area labeled the message too controversial and effectively shut down this expression of faith. Second, since 1926 the people of Maine have been inspired by the First Radio Parish Church of America with its stories of hope, faith, and reason that touch the hearts and educated minds. Filled with Down East wisdom these meditations aired on six AM and FM stations across the state. However in 2003 two purchases within a year by non-local corporations led to the removal of these warm and wonderful programs relegating First Radio Parish's message to a single station in Bangor. Third, in 2004 a television commercial produced as part of the United Church of Christ National Identity Campaign was refused paid air time on two networks because executives deemed it too controversial despite no complaints from the public in six test markets including one in Ohio, in Cleveland/Akron/Canton. The ad extends a welcome to non-traditional families, youth, people with disabilities, gay and lesbian people, people who are not appropriately dressed. While the people in Ohio, along with the other states in the test market regions, did not object once to this ad, network executives in New York

refused to air the commercial. One executive even claimed the ad promotes gay marriage—it does not—and since the current administration was opposed to gay marriage, it would be inappropriate to air the commercial. The fact that this is an egregious imposition of politics into religious expression is self-evident. *[applause]* In sum, if ownership caps are relaxed air time for diverse, locally-based, religious, and cultural voices will diminish, washed away in a homogenization of simplistic, lowest common denominator platitudes. This is not good for faith groups and it is not good for democracy, and so we call upon the FCC to exercise its Congressionally mandated authority, and set policies not based on economic efficiencies, but on the public interest and therefore restore the airwaves to the people. *[applause]*

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you to all the panelists. Commissioner Michael Copps has arrived, and we ant to welcome him. He has served at the FCC since December 2002. Before that he served until January 2001 as Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Trade Development at the US Department of Commerce. He came to Washington in 1970, joining the staff of Senator Ernest Hollings, and serving for over a dozen years as Chief of Staff. He has also held positions at a Fortune 500 company, a major trade association, and he's even been a professor. Thank you Commissioner Copps. *[applause]*

COMMISSIONER COPPS: You talk about a bully pulpit. You can't beat this one, and I had kind of a longer sermon I was going to deliver tonight, but since I'm late getting here—I actually left my office in Washington at 12:00 noon—we didn't take off from Washington National airport unfortunately, because of the weather, until 5:00. So I

apologize for missing the first part, but I am delighted to be here tonight. I want to first of all thank Free Press and all of the other groups that joined in sponsoring this affair tonight, and my good friend Josh Silver here, who some of you may have seen in the Wall Street Journal. You know when you're covered in the Wall Street Journal that folks are starting to take you pretty seriously when you're a consumer advocacy, public interest group. So that was good news. [*applause*] It's a pleasure to be in Ohio, home of our new Senator and my good friend Sherrod Brown, who I know feels so strongly about some of the issues that we are talking about here tonight. I'm delighted to be here. I'm delighted that we have him to work with in the United States Senate. You know, this is the most important meeting taking place anywhere in Ohio tonight. Why do I say that? I say that because this goes to the future of the most powerful industry in the United States of America. And that's our media. Think about it. That's how we communicate with each other when we're not in a building like this and can talk to one another. And a lot of folks are worried about the direction of that industry, that most powerful industry in America in light of all the rampant consolidation that has taken place in our country since the 1990s. They're worried about the kind of homogenized entertainment that they're getting from big media. You know you can get in your car in Los Angeles, California and drive to the East Coast of the United States and you probably hear the same 20 songs played time and time and time again. They're worried about the loss of diversity on the airwaves. Where is that great tapestry of America on our airwaves? It's sure not that homogenized, nationalized drivel that we're delivered each day. They're worried that minorities are relegated to the back of the broadcast bus, and that's exactly what's happened when 30% of your population own 3% of your television outlets. What do you expect the results of

that are going to be? Should we be surprised that issues of interest to diversity in community aren't covered when minorities own so little? Should we surprised that they are stereotyped and caricatured? Should we surprised that all the good things that they contribute to our communities are almost never ever covered? But watching them jump over fences or cross borders illegally, that's how we cover Latinos. The crime report—that's how we cover African Americans. We ignore all the good things that go on. We've got to do something about that. People are worried that our democracy cannot survive big media's continuing inattention to important issues, continued ignoring of opposing viewpoints, continued inattention to covering public issues, the inability to distinguish news from entertainment, or information from propaganda. So this is mighty, mighty important. *[applause]* Three years ago, the last time the FCC considered our media consolidation rules, the few remaining ownership rules that we have, it was a near catastrophe for your country and mine, as then-Chairman Michael Powell rammed through the Commission, over the objections of Commissioner Adelstein and myself, Commissioner McDowell wasn't there yet—counting on him this time—pushed those through. But Michael Powell didn't count on something. He thought maybe the American people would never hear about it. He did this behind closed doors at the FCC in Southwest Washington, DC. He had the usual submissions from the corporate lobbyists. He didn't go out to talk to Americans. Commissioner Adelstein and I begged for hearings around the country. He wouldn't give us the money to do any of them. We went out and did them ourselves anyhow on our little travel budgets that we had, *[applause]* and then thanks to folks like Free Press, Common Cause, United Church of Christ, Consumers Union, so many, many other groups, NAACP, diversity groups, goes on and on left and

right. By the way this is not a partisan issue. It's not a red state or a blue state issue. This is a grassroots issue. And that grassroots came together and sent three million messages of protest to the Federal Communications Commission. When I became a Commissioner in 2001 I didn't think three million Americans knew there was a place called the Federal Communications Commission. But folks found out, and they let Powell know, and they let their members of Congress know, and the United States Senate voted to overturn those rules. and the House would have voted to do the same if they'd been allowed to vote on the whole thing, but then the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, at the urging of the Prometheus Project and many of the groups sponsoring this meeting tonight, overturned those rules, sent them back to the FCC. Now think about that. A lot of people say "well you can't make a difference as a citizen in the United States of America anymore. You made a difference three years ago. You checked those rules. [applause] You can do it again and you've got to do it again, because we're starting this proceeding over. We've got to send something back to the Third Circuit Court. We have to get our ducks in a row about what it is we're going to do with these media ownership rules. But you know what? There's a different climate in Washington, DC right now. Yes we're going to everything we can and yes we need everybody's help in this room to defeat bad new media ownership rules, but by golly I think we can now stop playing just defense, start playing offense, and do something to return public interest to the airwaves. [applause] One of the previous speakers talked about licensing. I'm for that. I think there's a lot of people in Congress that would vote for that. I think people understand that issue. Fifteen, twenty years ago if you were a licensee broadcast station every three years you had to come in to the FCC, and you had to demonstrate that you were meeting the guidelines that we had,

which were twelve or fourteen public interest obligations. Are you teeing up issues of interest to your community? Are you going out and talking to people in your community? We required that of the local owner when he lived in the town. Now the local owner might be 3,000 miles away. Oh, he doesn't have to do that. We don't expect him to talk to anybody. Just talk to the home office and put on the air the same kind of drivel that we see too often from big media. So we've got to get serious about that. Every eight years now all they have to do is send in a postcard and they get their license renewal mailed to them. No questions asked. We don't even look at the public file unless somebody has registered a complaint, and unless you're a child abuser or a wife beater it's a slam dunk. It's a slam dunk that you're going to get your license renewed. I know we haven't denied any licenses on public interest grounds since I've been at the FCC, and we've got to start taking that seriously. You folks own the airwaves. There's not a broadcaster, a business, a special interest in the United States of America that owns an airwave. And I say fellow owners: It's time to reassert our ownership rights. *[applause]* You know there's some folks from Washington that I think I get a little bit carried away with this issue. It's far and away my top priority at the FCC. And they say, "you know a lot of other issues in this country Copps—peace, and war, Iraq, finding a job, keeping a job, educating your kids, finding health insurance in a country where we have almost 45, 47 million people uninsured—why you off on this tangent of media ownership?" And I tell those people, "I understand you have your important issue and I respect, but if this issue is not your number one issue—this media consolidation, what is the future of this industry—it ought to be your second most important issue, because all those other issues you care about are filtered through that funnel of big media. *[applause]* Now if you're happy with that and

you think all those other issues are being dealt with just great by big media, fine, you don't have to listen to another thing I've got to say. But if you think those issues might fare just a little bit better if they were emanating from a more diverse media, and a diversity where your rights were respected, and your access, your opinions counted, and you could get them on the airwaves, then you really ought to make this right up at the top of your list of priorities." So I think we can win again. I think we can go on the offensive. I think we can try to make sure that this digital TV transition that we're entering into now—you know your local broadcasting station already pretty powerful with the one broadcast stream in your city or town, pretty soon you'll be able to multicast half a dozen of them in. Why can't we figure out a way to make four or five of those other streams, or three or two of them serve the public interest, and provide access to localism, and diversity, and community? *[applause]* So let me get out of the way. As I say this is very inviting here to have this pulpit in this church and this wonderful audience and I'd like to go on, but I just want to emphasize that the stakes are so enormous. It's a hard fight. Industry might tell me—the broadcast industry—"we're not interested in that consolidation anymore. It's a new day". I've read their pleadings at the FCC. They are still marching to the drummer of consolidation deals, swaps, duopolies, triopolies, the whole nine yards. So we need to work hard. We need to go on the offensive. I think if we work right, work together, and pull together we can do it, and at the end of the day there's something pretty special waiting for us, and that's airwaves of and by and for the American people. It's called media democracy. I like the ring of that, don't you? *[applause]* Let's go there. Thank you.

CHRIS CLOAK: Let me, as we get started to hear from you all, be clear and transparent about what's getting ready to happen. You each have two minutes. We have over 90 people, as near as I can tell, who have signed up. *[applause]* Now that's great and the Commissioners have said they want to hear from that many people. At two minutes per person that's three hours, which means we're here until at least 10:30. So I'm asking for your shared respect for one another. What I'm going to do is this. I have and I will continue to get copies of the sign-in sheets. What I'm going to do is go through and order each name. I'm going to read out five or six names in advance so you know who's coming next, and I will invite you up to start speaking. When it is 30 seconds left I will put my hand up in a way that will allow you to be visible, and at two minutes I will say "thank you", and I will call the next person. So that's the basic procedure.

JOHN RYAN: Good evening, John Ryan, the head of the North Shore AFL-CIO, representing about 130,000 workers a little bit further up the state. Good evening and really welcome for coming here Commissioners, and it's especially important as mentioned before because we have a bipartisan panel here tonight. I echo the concerns of others about media consolidation. I could talk quite a bit about workers' rights, but instead I'd like to give two stories about workers' voice. Tonight I feel quite older than usual thinking back to 25 years ago when I was first elected to a union office, and we used to take two people off the job for half a day and send them out to all the different radio stations, and the TV stations, and the newspapers, the daily papers. And today we don't need to do that, and we can send out just with one push of the button on the electronic. The difference though is I wouldn't have to take two people off the job for half

the day and send them out in person, and years ago we used to have four or five radio stations at an event, a couple of daily newspapers, some TV stations. Today we don't have that. We might have one or two stations at best at a press event or some event talking about workers' rights. We're lucky if we have one radio station showing up, and we're lucky if we have one newspaper showing up. And the reason why can be illustrated when you walk up to Clear Channel to do an interview and you see all these different logos up on the wall as kind of trophies. Those were the outlets that used to come out, and not only are they consolidated, but they also don't come out. The second story is a briefer one, you know because of thinking about the three hours. Years ago we used to have two newspapers. Both had labor reporters, and little by little they gave labor reporters more and more work to do, and I was just notified last week our one daily newspaper, good daily newspaper, now no longer has a labor reporter, and they're claiming because they need to cut back. It's up to you Commissioners to please caliber the drain of the drive for profits versus the free press. Thank you very much. *[applause]*

CHRIS CLOAK: A little bit after Java Kitrick we have Cynthia Vantreause, Dr. Jeffrey Kee, Bishop Marshall, and Judith Powell, if you could join the line, and Charles Glover if you could begin please.

CHARLES GLOVER: My name is Charles Glover. I'm Chairman and CEO of the Corporate Media Consultants Group. We're one of the few minority broadcasters in the country owned and controlled. We own three television stations now: Portland, Fox, and Main. We own WMEI in Puerto Rico, and we also own WVIF in St. Croix, US Virgin

Islands. I came here out of concern for freedom of speech and minority ownership, and everything that the distinguished panel and the Commissioners, who I'd like to thank for coming out also, have been speaking about this evening I've been living for the last three years. It is sort of like watching the old TV show This Is Your Life, and you sit here and you see all the different comments from all the different people in Columbus media. You see the Commissioners. You see everyone very, very excited about the potential for our ability to come out now and change the way that the FCC functions, and I get very nervous when I'm doing public speaking. You can call my office, I'll run my mouth all day. But however I'd like to say that there are certain things that we need to concentrate on if possible, Commissioners. One is to level the playing field for ownership. We need access to capital, as Percy was speaking about and addressed. We need to understand that diversity in ownership equals diversity of message in programming. Consolidation inhibits that diversity. Consolidation inhibits diversity on all levels. Minority ownership encourages community involvement which creates an interest in localism as well as news and entertainment. In one of the markets that we function in Portland, Maine, I'm in competition with Sinclair, Hearst-Argyle, and Gannet, three very, very heavy hitters. However having said that we've been able to sustain our business and to actually start to flourish after three years.

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you. Could you cut to a final second. Are you done?

CHARLES GLOVER: Well I'd just like to add, I'd like to wrap this up by saying that what we need to right now is we need to take, serious, serious action at how the laws, the

regulations are structured at the FCC because the people who now are in control of the media, they've been at it for 30, 40 years. They know all the tricks. They know how to get around it.

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

CHARLES GLOVER: And what they're doing is they're squashing everyone, all the little guys. Thank you. [*applause*]

BRIAN ROTHENBERG: Commissioners, thank you for coming. My name is Brian Rothenberg. I'm Executive Director of progressohio.org, which is a nonprofit, online organization. We are struggling right now in this market. I am here because 6,000 people in a week and a half period signed petitions when progressive radio was taken off the air by Clear Channel. At that point time, to tell you how unfair the playing field is, we had announced that we were going to do a protest. When we showed up to do the protest, which was in 0⁰ weather, we were greeted by taking the station off the air one day earlier than they had previously announced. Signs that were hung outside by Clear Channel that were defaced with the former radio stations call letters on it. We entered in and we presented the joint petitions. It was two different groups and they had absolutely no interest in the petitions, talked to them for a while and they then asked us to leave, and said if we did not leave the premises and the lot outside the building we would be arrested for exercising our First Amendment rights. I might add that a number of those people are here in the audience. We probably would have been arrested but the Buckeyes

were playing in the national championship game [*laughter*], and after that we pretty much decided we probably really should have been arrested after the outcome of that game. But I would say that one week later in Toledo the Mayor of Toledo kicked out a Clear Channel reporter and they filed a suit over free speech issues. This was the same company that had threatened us for exercising our free speech. This is the town that had one of the exemptions for the newspaper, radio, and television rule in the Dispatch company, that it was one of the original tenets of the FCC that they were concerned about what consolidation of the media can do. We are now and rip and read society. If people in the 1930s were concerned about conglomeration of the Dispatch, it is no longer an issue.

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

BRIAN ROTHENBERG: The issue now is the fact that we have only rip and read news, and only AP wire service and the local paper.

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you Brian.

BRIAN ROTHENBERG: Thank you.

CHRIS CLOAK: Go ahead Andy.

ANDY VALERI: Yes, Andy Valeri from Dayton, Ohio. Thank you for coming to Ohio. I appreciate that. I think that we're well served to recall that Article 1, Section 2 of the

Ohio Constitution makes it clear that all political power's inherent in the people, echoing the founding principle of the very purpose of our nation that governments are instituted amongst the people, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. I bring that up because that simple concept—truly American one—seems to have been lost on this body over the last few years in some of its decision making processes, which time doesn't allow me to get into in detail, but we know what democracy is, or we think we do—government of, by, and for the people—so one would figure that in America, a democracy, when 99% of the people speak out against something, a public service body like the FCC would recognize that and fulfill its function to enforce the will of the democratic majority. If you recall, in 2003 99% of the people—three million people—s said no, we do not want continued media consolidation. We do not want it increased. So what did you do? You proceeded to go ahead and increase it, okay. What part of 'no' did you not understand with that? We did mean no, didn't mean yes, just move a little slower. It didn't mean do it a little more secretly. It didn't mean do it in increments. It said no, and it didn't mean no just as long as the short-term share price of Viacom or GE wasn't affected. The fact that that was a negotiable thing I think is a disturbing fact, and when the FCC acts in such flagrant contravention of the clearly stated will of the citizens of this nation, is it appropriate in the truest American tradition to question the legitimacy of that authority to do that in contravention to our authority. And I'm not talking about some of the people here because I know Michael Copps and Jonathan Adelstein have been tremendous heroes on standing up to that. I know time is short but I also do want to mention quickly I received a letter from the FCC in response to a discussion on input on the AT&T merger.

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

ANDY VALERI: It's addressed to "Dear Consumer", not citizen, consumer.

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you. Thank you Andy. [*applause*]

JAVA KITRICK: I'm Java Kitrick. I'm with the Puffin Foundation. I want to thank the Commissioners Adelstein, Copps, and McDowell for allowing us to participate. Columbus is a city where 40% of our population have arrived from all over America, and more recently from all over the world. Once again Columbus, Ohio should be considered the flash point because a few uber-companies dominate the marketplace, but do not appropriately represent the people who live here. Many citizens in Columbus do not even know how diverse their city has become because nobody has told them. The best five-mile thoroughfare to drive down that makes this point is Morse Road, where you'll find Somali and other African marketplaces, Central and South American marketplaces, Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese and other Asian marketplaces, all coexisting side by side. The median age in Columbus is 30.6 years. With youth and vigor come great new ideas, but alas without local access our local talent gets only a limited chance to announce that they are open for business, as the cost to advertise is usually too high and the options are definitely too small. Too often I drive by a shop where I've spent money in and there's a "For Rent" sign hanging in the window a year later. I know that somebody's dream and capital and probably spirit have been lost. America is still a country of small businesses,

ma & pa and MBA entrepreneurs, and the driving force behind this economy, but without competition... Alright I'll move on. I am certain that your own stockbrokers have told you that to remain financially secure you should diversify. Localism and diversity are a sound investment for the future of America. Thank you. [*applause*]

CHRIS CLOAK: Bishop Marshall and Judith Powell, Logan Martinez, Russ Childers, Dave Daulton, and Elyse Power will be coming up. So, Cynthia.

CYNTHIA VANTREAUSE: Okay, my name is Cindy Vantreuse and I'm concerned about consolidation of media and censorship. Whoever controls the media controls the message. For example look what happened to the Dixie Chicks when they exercised free speech. Clear Channel removed their songs from their channels. Phil Donahue was removed from CNBC. They said it was because his ratings were low, but that month in February his ratings were higher than anybody else's on their station. The liberal media Fair received an internal memo from NBC that said, and I quote, "that he would be a difficult public face for NBC in a time of war". This is a prime example of media controlling the message. Large media corporations cater to the bottom line and their shareholders. They don't necessarily do what is in the interest of the local communities that they serve. The public owns the airwaves, and what is good for the community is not necessarily good for the profit sheets of the companies. I fear for our democracy when companies are allowed to have almost monopolistic control of the media of our city. Remember, who controls the media controls the message. Thank you. [*applause*]

[*name of speaker unknown*]: Thank you all for coming. We really do appreciate that. Before I get started, before my time starts, I will quote you some facts that's indicative only to the black community. This is from the black perspective. I am one of many voices. I represent the conscience, concerns, and issues of the black community. It is my adamant belief that the news media and the broadcasting media in Columbus is purposely derelict in its reporting of the news and representing people of color. This is a perpetual ploy of the broadcasting industry on a local national basis to omit and/or underreport black concerns and the news. The media portrays black people as muggers, thugs, robbers, drug users, bling bling around our necks, drive-by shooters with gold teeth in our mouth, uneducated or undereducated, with a father figure missing in the home, pregnant daughters, all of which are unmarried, living in cockroach-infested homes, alcoholic mothers who could care less in their children's education. This is nothing but brainwashing by means of establishing the fear factor in white people. It's racist and certainly untrue. This is a [*unintelligible*] of the media, saying the same thing overtly and covertly, in other words, mind control. Four companies control 75% of the Columbus area's local news media. Channel 10 TV, 1460 AM, and 97.1 FM are owned by the family that owns the Columbus Dispatch newspaper. This is a total monopoly over the print media, but this also comprises nearly half of the local news market in this area. When Columbus lost WVKO 1580 AM radio last May this left a vacuum in the black community. WVKO was certainly a venue to connect the black community on many levels, notwithstanding the ability for accurate reporting of the news and issues that impact our families and communities on a local, national and international level.

[*name of speaker unknown*]: Bishop Marshall, Fred Marshall is not here. He represents the IMA, which is the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance. We're concerned the local community station that is funded by the FCC and the cable companies that are funded by the cable companies. We know that we're supposed to have a public access channel which we do not have, an education channel, and a government channel. The government channel is the biggest channel in all of this city, and we're upset because they've taken the voice of the people. When I went to Ohio University they taught me that democracy, true democracy, when the people speak out, and Community 21, which is a local public access channel that they took away from us, is no longer in existence and the voice of the people is gone. And the problem is that the FCC Commission has done nothing to rectify this situation for us. It seems like to go to court with the Mayor and his administration in order to get our channel back. This is supposed to be an all-American city but this all-American city does not have a black-owned radio station, and does not have a black-owned television station, nor does it have public access, the people's voice. And that is an atrocity. That is an atrocity. [*applause*] I would wish that this FCC board members would take back to their other board members that we need to have public access. The law mandated it, but you have not come to this city and suspended stuff to make sure that the people have a voice. It's important that people have a voice that they can speak to their government, so that they can speak to their other residents of the community, so that we'll be able to exchange ideas and other substance on a regular scheduled basis. I would trust that you would take this request very seriously and direct us in what we need to do in order to have a public access channel in this all-American city. Thank you. [*applause*]

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you very much.

LOGAN MARTINEZ: My name is Logan Martinez, and we do have public access still in Dayton, though we're very concerned that it's under fire and may soon go the way of Columbus, and we're in solidarity with the people in Columbus. I host and produce two TV shows in Dayton: Citizen Impact, which is a show done by low-income and unemployed people by the Miami Valley Full Employment Council, and the Green Party News, which covers electoral news, and we're very thankful to have that in Dayton. To go back, to repeat what one of the early speakers, when we did news conferences back in the 70s we had two or three, four, five sometimes radio stations that showed, that came up, and covered the things that we were talking about. We had two newspapers. Now we only have one. Those radio stations are no longer doing news. We have about one and a half radio stations that cover any kind of news at all in Dayton, and the upshot of this is we as a society, with what has gone on with media, what has gone on with our economy, what has gone on with our environment, we are at the peak of alienation and a sort of 1984 society in which we are mice in the rat race, and while I applaud the changes that might happen with you guys standing up here, the fact is it's way past that point. We need to break up big media. *[applause]* The only way that we're going to change things as far as it has gotten, we are five years into a war that should never have happened. *[applause]* Now either I encourage everyone to go back to your neighborhoods, back to your communities. We have to knock on doors, talk to our fellow citizens, and mobilize America to save what's left of our democracy,

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you Logan.

LOGAN MARTINEZ: or we will end up like Nazi Germany and we will end up like the rest of them.

CHRIS CLOAK: ...Number 15 Lamonte Young. Right now we have Russ Childers.

RUSS CHILDERS: My favorite radio station, WTPG, owned by Clear Channel, was silenced this January, after only two years on the air. Its format has been changed from progressive talk to conservative talk. Now all the commercial talk radio stations in Central Ohio are conservative. There is just one commercial progressive talk radio station left in all of Ohio, down from four. 55% of Ohioans voted for a Democrat for Governor in the last election, 58% in Central Ohio. The station manager at WTPG claimed that no one listened and no one advertised, so the format change was purely a business decision. The station manager has not produced any documentation proving this however. The claim that the format is unpopular has poisoned the well of this new progressive talk format here in Central Ohio. The claim of low listenership is understandable considering the station did not market itself. I stumbled on the station by chance. The station's sales team sold ads at bargain basement prices, raising doubts in advertisers' minds that the station had listeners. The station's sales and promotions teams are not inept however, because the top three commercial radio stations in the Columbus market are also run by Clear Channel. The station manager was indifferent at best to the survival of the station.

A mom and pop owner would have promoted the station and would have been more invested in its survival. A mom and pop owner would not switch to conservative talk anyway, because there's already four such stations available locally. Thus the station management did not promote the station, cited business reasons for the format change without proof, is now airing conservative talk, which has heavy competition from established stations, and Columbus Clear Channel has created the false impression that progressive talk is unpopular, even though the majority of Ohioans voted for Democrats. I have a petition here signed by 2,794 people...

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

RUSS CHILDERS: ...also with testimonies, saying just about the same thing I am saying that I'd like to present to the Commissioners. [*applause*]

CHRIS CLOAK: After Dave Daulton will be Elyse Power.

DAVE DAULTON: I'm Dave Daulton. I'm also active with Ohio Majority Radio, and I live in a suburb of Columbus called Gahanna, and I think everyone here can vouch for me that rhymes with banana. But when I turn on my radio I hear "Ga-hana", which makes me suspect that maybe these people talking on the radio really don't know or maybe don't even care about my community, and what reinforces that is when we went to Clear Channel back in January, presented 6,000 names in a petition against yet another vile and insult talk station being imposed on Central Ohio, and they told us, Number 1, it's a

business decision, and Number 2, believe it or not, you will get used to it. *[laughter]*

They would not listen to us, so now I am asking the FCC members, please do something about it, and never mind how they pronounce Gahanna. Far more importantly, please mandate that they learn to respect Columbus values. Please tell them that their station—these are the call letters, WYTS—that brings us Michael Savage and similar programs, is already earning nickname of "whites Only Radio". Please tell them that in the city that gave Jesse Owens to the world, Savage calling black kids "ghetto slime" is unacceptable. Please tell them *[applause]* calling Hispanics "leaf blowers" and claiming they're waging war on the white race is not something we want our children to hear. Please tell them we have welcomed Somali refugees to our town and when he insults them, he insults our neighbors. Please tell them we have a gay City Council member who we all respect and when he tells a gay caller to get AIDS and die we consider that far more indecent than flashing a breast. And finally tell them Columbus is a good place to live, where drivers let you out of parking lots and we all get along pretty well, and we want to keep it that way, and as for the foul values that airwaves' occupiers have imposed on us, if this is a business decision, it's a bad one. And no, we refuse to get used to it. Thank you.

[applause]

ELYSE POWER: My name is Elyse Power. I teach Spanish in Pittsburgh public schools, which were closed today, and they said it was because of the snow, but I feel it was a gift of a day off to come to this event, and the snow wasn't bad enough to keep me from making the trip. I want to speak on behalf of the young people I teach. I want them to be able to learn the truth about what's happening in the world. I want them to learn to

evaluate different points of view. I hope they will have opportunities to express their concerns and tell their stories. They should be able to become media owners, producers, and journalists in media that are diverse and independent. None of them should live in communities where most of the news comes from a single source. Robert McChesney of Free Press wrote a book called "The Problem of the Media". That book inspired me to get involved in the media reform movement, partly because of the history it talks about, the history of the media in America. McChesney writes about how the founders of this country cared very much about media ownership. They set up a system of subsidizing the printing and the distribution of newspapers. They wanted lots of different papers to be read widely and discussed by everyone, and they passed the Post Office Act of 1792 with the intention of promoting a diverse press available to everyone. I believe that Thomas Jefferson and his colleagues would be horrified to see how our news media have become concentrated in a few large corporations. I think they would be at these hearings, objecting to a system that stifles democratic debate. I want my students as they grow up to live with media rules that foster diversity, truth-telling, and lively debate. Thank you.

[applause]

TOM WORTH: I'm Tom Worth from Media Bridges in Cincinnati and with a group up here. Okay. *[unintelligible]* In order to make good choices we need many viewpoints best served by... that's bad writing... best served by grassroots media. In the last election I wasn't able to make any kind of choice from the negative advertising. I had to go to the Internet, which is grassroots I guess, in order to look at resumes and actual voting records in stead of the usual negativity that you get. I believe that the negative advertising is

profit-mongering gone crazy, and we see through it. If they made one-sided negative political ads illegal I would feel no loss, and thanks, that's all I have to say. *[applause]*

CHRIS CLOAK: Go ahead Kelly.

KELLY SMITH: My name is Kelly Smith. I'm with Media Bridges also out of Cincinnati, and I believe that big media stifles viewpoints. That means less diversity of voices and a narrow range of debate. I believe that big media doesn't serve local communities. As local stations get bought up by big national corporations with centralized operations they become even less accountable to the community they serve. I believe that big media ignores diversity. Corporate media conglomerates or concerns with profit than with responsible programming. The needs of people of color, the working class, and rural citizens are squinched or ignored because these people aren't advertisers' target audiences. I believe we need diverse local ownerships of the media. Without ownership limits, giant national corporations buy up local stations and eliminate diverse local and independent programming in the interest of profits. If the FCC is serious about fostering localism and diversity on the airwaves it must enact protections against consolidated corporate ownership. Thank you for letting me present my speech. *[applause]*

JEREMY WOLFORD: We're going to reverse that. My name is Jeremy Wolford and I'm in Cincinnati, Ohio, long-time listener, first-time caller, and I just wanted to voice my opinion on an episode or an issue that had gone down in Cincinnati, and basically that's

the fact that one evening several months ago at the Community Media Center there was a slip-up on air where the F-bomb was dropped, and so the corporate media within the area decided to focus on that. They came down. They shot really bad b-roll of VCRs, and basically told the people that this is where your taxpayer money is going, and they failed to mention that it was 90 cents per subscriber a month that was going towards this. They decided to just focus on the fact that this was a big mess-up. That same night there was a gun shot, there was a death, and they failed to mention that. I don't want the details of the murder. What I want to know is where it happened. I want to know how we can deal with it, and that was failed to be mentioned on the television stations. We all have children. We all care about our community, and I think we need to focus on how to make a better community. Thank you.

LAMONTE YOUNG: Thank you for having me. My name is Lamonte Young. I'm from Cincinnati. I represent Media Bridges. I'm a local filmmaker, as well as musician, and I just wanted to give my perspective of big media. Without having places like Media Bridges someone like me could not put out documentaries or be able to put out programming. Unfortunately we live in a city that's real conservative in regards to what's being portrayed on television or on our radio stations. Having a venue like this, like Media Bridges, or anywhere in the country just having more places where the public actually can create content, and if local television stations are not taking the initiative to voice the local opinions or views of the city, then that's why we should have these avenues for local media. I know I wouldn't be anywhere if places like Media Bridges

weren't around, just even having the knowledge, going to school for it, and being able to apply those skills. I wouldn't be able to express that without... Thank you.

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

JAMES STEVENS: Hello. My name is James Stevens. I also hail from Media Bridges in Cincinnati, Ohio, and I'd like to say that if it wasn't for Media Bridges I probably wouldn't be here right now. It really gave me focus on what my calling was, which was starting my own show, letting me express my views as being a minority, as an Asian American, and it also let me finally let everyone else know what my favorite passion is, which is video games. That's probably the only show like it over the air, and there's a million people like me out there who want to have shows like that, where it's just for fun. You know what I mean? Everyone needs to let loose every now and then, and that's why public access should stay on, because of freedom speech. Anybody can express themselves anyway they want and also build a potential newscasting career, if you may. And that's what I have to say.

[*name of speaker unknown*]: Thank you very much for coming tonight. I have to say that this is very exciting to me as a citizen to see our public officials coming out and hearing from folks. Unfortunately when this doesn't happen the only way that public officials have to gauge what is going on in the community is through the media, and if the media has a particular perception that they are pushing, or something that they would just assume not have public officials know about, it's not going to make the front page of the

newspaper and it's not going to show up in the TV shows. So I very much appreciate you coming out. I think it's a wonderful demonstration of democracy at work, and I think that information is power, and if we allow power to be concentrated into a very few hands, I think that we are all going to rue the day that we allow that to happen. And I would say to you that if a tree falls in a forest and no one hears it, did the tree fall? And unfortunately I think that right now, since the only way we have to know that trees are falling is through our media and some trees our media doesn't care about, the trees don't exist. And I think it's very sad when we have condemned portions of our community, basically a death sentence—they don't exist, and so therefore the media doesn't report. Thank you very much.

[*name of speaker unknown*]: Thank you. My airwaves are turning dollar profit engine. I want a return on my investment. But instead I get the following: I see news anchors and dj's hosting local charitable events, yet I rarely see the work and concern of hundreds of civic organizations and local media. Instead I see crime, fires, celebrity escapades, stories that look suspiciously of video news releases that the local anchor's voice pasted over. I've recently attended a community meeting where I learned that the foreign-born population of Central Ohio is equal to the population of Youngstown, yet you would never know this by looking at our local media. How can we solve our local challenges if we don't even know who are neighbors are? We have two TV stations operated by Sinclair Broadcasting with duplicated news rooms, duplicated reporters, and double the opportunity for Sinclair to editorialize from the East Coast without having to engage anyone locally about that content, or offering opportunities to reply [*applause*]. I spin my

AM radio in the evening and I hear the same syndicated talk shows on multiple stations. I jump to FM and I hear the same sporting stations I heard on the AM side, and it's rare when I hear local music instead of what is being pushed by the record and advertising industries. During recent elections I was bombarded with campaign ads making the most provocative claims and accusations, yet neither the ads nor the issues received any sustained or serious coverage on local TV. *[applause]* How can we make decisions if this is the level of informed discourse we have during our election campaign? Broadcasters say they are giving us what they want, but this is a hollow argument since the entire media industry is dedicated to turning me into a tiny demographic to be delivered, instead of a citizen to be served. It's time to give the people what they want and deserve, media that treats us as citizens, and as worthy of the democracy we claim to practice. Thank you. *[applause]*

[name of speaker unknown]: Greetings gentlemen and thank you very much for making the trip here to Columbus, Ohio. On behalf of the citizens we really appreciate it. And I want to talk about the pathetic condition of radio, especially local radio and the ownership here in Columbus, Ohio. Let me just tell you that it is lousy. They absolutely, and I probably don't need to tell you that, but they absolutely do not care or they do not serve public interest. It's just the opposite. A lot of the stations are nothing more than a computer in a broom closet. We're stuck with syndicated, mediocre programming that frankly no one listens to. The airwaves belong to us? That's a joke. I mean it's more like the rich elite. And I do have some talking notes here. They care nothing about public interest. The agenda of big media is they want total control of what the public hears, what

the public sees, and what the public reads. They want to control the content, and it's just like the payola scam that you guys have been investigating and you're getting ready to bring fines on [*applause*]. They want to limit access to anybody outside the good old boys club and Columbus, Ohio is a prime example of that. Radio stations here—the owners—their the modern day snake oil salesmen, a bunch of hucksters basically trying to hoodwink audiences and advertisers. The dj's, you know they talk about what scripts or facts from corporate headquarters, a la Clear Channel, and they're like sock puppets on a string. The fact is that here in Columbus, Ohio we have nothing for the real people, the average citizens, and meanwhile I'd just like to thank you again for coming to Columbus, Ohio, and I hope you take this message back to Washington. Tell the politicians just like the big mergers being proposed for satellite radio, we don't want none of it. We're tired of the monopolies. We want freedom for the people. Thank you.

MICHAEL ZARZANO: Good evening gentlemen. I'm speaking to you tonight as a nineteen year, conservative, political, religious, and social activist in the city of Columbus, Ohio. There's one thing clear tonight that is unanimous, that we the people see a threat. The threat is big money media. [*applause*] This is one issue that unites all of us in this room, whether you're left, right wing, Democrat, Republican, or independent, that we smell a threat and it's called media, and it's too big for its own britches. It needs to be restricted and controlled and regulated. You can't trust big corporate media. We've seen it lately with payola as the former speaker advised you, with the Spanish children's show, a 24 million dollar fine that was levied, 12.5 million to the biggest broadcasters, Clear Channel, etc., because of their payola to certain songs on the radio. Big money is

controlling this country. We've got the best government money can buy, and don't let the media be that way if you have anything to do with it. *[applause]* The more money, the louder the voice. Evidence of this was manifested in the settlement recently of payola. Local evidence is with NPR, National Pravda Radio, *[laughter]* left-wing, liberal voice only, and it's unfortunate. We need to hear all voices, left and right. Myself I've been banned from that radio station for my ultra-conservative views. And don't think I feel home at Clear Channel 610. Certain talk show hosts have also banned me because of my ultra-liberal, right-wing policies. They would seem to think it was liberal. Public access channel locally has been eliminated by the Democrat mayor. Why?

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you Michael.

MICHAEL ZARZANO: Thank you. *[applause]*

DAN HARKMAN: My name is Dan Harkman and I'm here representing only myself, but I'd like to give voice to a concept that nearly every speaker has alluded to but no one has come right out and said, and that is it's absolutely ridiculous for the FCC to consider further expanding media ownership rights, when the only question you should be asking yourselves is how far back we should roll back the limits that are already in place *[applause]*. As Carol Shultz alluded to earlier, the damage has already been done. The news gathering capability of the corporate media is already severely damaged by the consolidation that's already taken place. The only way to restore that capability is to roll back some of that consolidation. In fact, because the press is the only industry alluded or

given specific protections by the United States Constitution, I think we should give it special protection also, just like the [unintelligible] on the table I'd like the US to look at the possibility of banning corporations from owning stock in media companies, [applause]allowing only individuals to own stock in media companies. I know it's just a pipe dream, but the main point I want to get across is you've got to look at rolling back the ownership limits to at least the point they were before the 1996 Telecommunications Act. Thank you. [applause]

RICHARD HAYES: My name is Richard Hayes, and I'm the Executive Director of Dayton Access Television, providing a public and a spiritual access channel to the people of Dayton, Ohio. I'm very glad that you came here tonight. I appreciate it greatly. I'm here to ask you not to continue to dismantle the rules that were originally created to protect the public interest. The reason the original rules were needed has not changed. Managing the public airwaves and protecting the public interest is still a goal in creating a public space that is open and accessible to all. By their nature corporations have to sacrifice the common good in favor of their self-interest—profit margin. I used to live in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and I saw what happens when one broadcast station is allowed to purchase a competitor. This happened in 1995. They used the local management region strategic arrangement and two broadcast affiliates were essentially joined into the same management entity. I don't doubt that the economy of scale was good for their profits. I'm sure of it, that the corporations were satisfied with what they accomplished, but what about the externalities that they caused? No one is concerned about the loss of jobs, the subsequent loss to the community of skilled professionals, as they had to leave the city to

seek jobs in their career field. But the most critical loss was the loss of diversity and voices, and the coverage of community. WKJG 33 had a long, proud history of producing community programming, providing local information, extensive coverage of high school sports, and of course news from a different point of view than the competitors. Now that unique voice is stilled, and instead there's just another mega-sized corporation with the capability to deliver one homogenous message to any television station they own throughout the country. Is the right way for the government to protect and increase diversity of opinion? Thank you.

VICTORIA PARKS: Thank you Commissioners for coming to our town to hear our voice. My name is Victoria Parks. I'm with Ohio Majority Radio. A lot of the people who have already testified today have spoken to my concerns. So I'm going to speak to one in particular. It is the terrible price that we have paid for media consolidation. The threat against a broad diversity of viewpoints in our media marketplace did not end when Reagan eliminated the Fairness Doctrine in 1986. It was also dealt a death blow by President Clinton's Telecommunications Act of 1996, which blew open the doors of media ownership for further consolidation by huge multinational conglomerates. The evil truth with which we saw borne out in the run-up to the war in Iraq. This war, which now turns out to have been started on false pretenses, was sold to us like a Madison Avenue ad campaign until we bought it hook, line, and sinker. Why? All for the promise of further FCC deregulation which guarantees to open up the doors to media consolidation yet further, and besides electronic voting, creates one of the greatest threats to our democracy that we have ever faced as a nation, and I mean that in total. Period. We the people were

hit with a great weapon—weapon of mass deception. On the surface media consolidation may seem benign enough. However because we no longer have an informed electorate free to hear the real truth of what is happening to us, our families and communities, our commonwealth has indeed paid the dearest price in blood and treasure. The American people have suffered the tragic consequences of media conglomeration in untold human life and suffering. We are tired of this. We deserve truth in broadcasting. We deserve fairness in broadcasting. We deserve to be protected from the scapegoating and propaganda. Thank you very much.

PAIGE CLIFTON-STEELE: My name is Paige. I go to college in Ohio. I work for my school newspaper as a reporter. It's conceivable that some day I may work for a local newspaper, local to where I don't know, because I came from Virginia and now I go to college in Ohio and next year I expect to be somewhere else. But every newspaper is local to somewhere, so I have to be concerned about the preservation for the rehabilitation of local news. There are local stories that must be covered by local people or they won't be covered. There are national stories that must be covered by local people or they won't be attended. This is a national story for instance, and I guarantee as I go home and I write a story about coming here today that I can name a 100 people who will know what happened who wouldn't know otherwise. Finally, national stories, they don't just start in DC, they start all over the nation, and if you get rid of local news or you consolidate all the media so that there is no more local news, then you don't have local news and you don't have national news; you just have Washington news. *[applause]*

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

JENNIFER JOHNSON: I'd like to think that I'm outside the mainstream. Ever since I was a teenager I wanted to be individualistic, not unlike many teenagers I have known. I'm eighteen years old, so I'm still a teenager. Now I go to Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Our school motto is "Be ashamed to die until you've won some great victory for humanity". Among the things I value are authenticity, rebellion, and truth. I was pretty much addicted to the Disney Channel as a young teen, and Nickelodeon as a kid. As an older teenager it was either live your life by MTV or VH1 or being seen as really weird. Being addicted to TV and being really weird didn't mean much to me, and now I don't watch TV anymore. The state of American media, however, continues to provoke me. I am originally from Rochester Hills, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit. If it were not for the times I turned on my local, public access channel I would have gone nuts, due to the lack of information that concerned and actually mattered to me. There once was a lady on roller blades dressed in a bathing suit that was essentially an American flag. She was talking about raw foods at two in the morning. I could also friends' bands concerts on this channel. Because of this channel alternatives to the mainstream in terms of food, music, and culture were offered to me. As far as radio goes this is something I think my generation has had to come to terms with. The radio stations are pathetic. One can go from city to city, county to county, state to state, hearing copycat radio stations with the same programs, the same cheesy radio dj's, and exact same songs. Having one big massive corporation to control what Americans believe is like the book 1984, where our past and present are being lied rather than reported to us. These are the

things that I hold to be important to me and a lot of my generation. I've known so many who have become complacent with their TV sets and their MSNBC or CNN news updates. Well I want more. I've always wanted more, and I've always been fighting for more, and I will continue to do so on a grassroots level. If you don't give it to me, if you don't give it to all of us...

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you Jennifer [*repeatedly*].

JENNIFER JOHNSON: ...we will give it to ourselves. There will always be an alternative to mass media, culture, and the mainstream, even if it has to be outside of all of this reality. [*applause*]

ONA HARSHAW: Hi, Ona Harshaw. Thanks for signing and thanks for coming. I can't directly address issues around and TV because I really stopped listening and watching commercial radio and TV when the first Gulf War insulted my senses and my young daughter's senses by being aired during dinner. I found that to be obscene and I just thought we had to stop watching it. So I listen to public radio and I contribute to public radio. What's happening though is I find that since it's becoming so hard for public radio to be funded—it's not being funded very well—it's becoming less diverse. It's sounding the same, and it's not serving the local community. It's sounding like our national public radio, rather than local radio, and I think that that is something I hope that you can address. Everything that everybody has spoken to up to this point is really important for

democracy in general, but I also urge you to look at how you reissue licenses. I think that that is imperative. Thank you. [*applause*]

ADRIENNE BAUER: Okay, my name is Adrienne Bauer and I'm from Central Illinois, and I'm here tonight on behalf of myself and to bring up the concerns of my father, Bill Taylor, who could not make it tonight due to work restrictions, on behalf of my two elderly employers, Rita and Charles Colbert, who could not make it tonight due to their health. I've been lucky enough to live in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois for most of my life, a community that has a volunteer-operated community radio station, as well as an NPR station, and recently a low power station, as well as the commercial and corporate stations. I'd always wanted more diversity on the dial, but I had no real conception of how lucky I was to have been living there until I moved to Ohio to attend college. Here in Ohio was the first real eye opener for me as to how consolidated and corporate our nation's media has become, not because that doesn't exist in Illinois, but because I lived in a very lucky town. My father laments the policy changes of 1996 and I concur. The current huge corporate media structures neither serve local communities, nor offer a diversity of opinions. The media serves to give a public voice to the people of America, protecting one of America's finest values, that of free speech. I am deeply troubled that it is even consideration to allow further consolidation of our media. When Rita, Chuck, and I, the elderly couple that I assist, and I watch CNN at 6:00 p.m. we find ourselves talking back the TV in disagreement. I realize that whether one is 88 years old or as young as I am the issue of diversity is pressing. Let us talk back to the TV about issues that are being reported about and not how they are being reported. Please listen to the voices of

the people who you represent, and keep media local and diverse in its ownership, and thereby its participation and representation. Thank you.

JOHN WAGNER: I am John Wagner. I'm a United Methodist minister who lives in Westerville. Democracy requires informed citizens. A free and effective are required for a working democracy. Print and electronic media are primary sources of information for most American citizens, but in an increasingly complex and dangerous world they are failing to provide the information needed for our democracy to work. The consolidation of television and radio networks homogenize the news all over America. These conglomerates preoccupied with the bottom line shape national and local news to enhance corporate profits. That's what they're in the business for. *[applause]* To grow advertising revenue, programming is designed to influence what are seen as key demographics. I have a son in the news business and he knows how important demographics are to the general manager, and to the news director. The station is there to make money. What they do is they target special audiences which can be persuaded to buy what the advertisers are selling. I mean that's the main idea, right? Profit-dominated networks hire local station managers to make money for ABC, NBC, CBS, and FOX. The general result is entertainment promoted as hard-hitting substantive news, ending up in sensational and titillating stories, rather than substantive reporting. American democracy is being undermined. There is some good things about living in Columbus. One of them is Fred Anderly on WOSU Radio *[applause]*.

CHRIS CLOAK: Daniel Parsons will be followed by number 31, Tom Bishop.

DANIEL PARSONS: Hello. My name is Daniel Parsons and I come to express my concern for diversity, localism, and the existence of independent dissenting voices in the media. I'm a Columbus community member and it's been my experience here in Columbus that the voices of LGBTQ communities, the voices of communities of color, and the voices of the many immigrant communities that make up Columbus, and the voices of youth are not only under-represented, but often misrepresented in the media. The many sounds and colors of the vibrant Columbus arts and music scene are subdued by the grayer tones of the Top 40 as dictated by Clear Channel, and dissenting, independent voices of issues global and local are all but silenced and absent in the media. So I come here to express my concern and frustration with the current situation, but more importantly to implore the Commissioners not to allow further consolidation of the media and to roll back on the consolidation that has already happened. Thank you for your time. *[applause]*

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

TOM BISHOP: Commissioners, thank you for being here this evening. My name is Tom Bishop and I'm here representing the Ohio and Kentucky chapter of the Alliance for Community Media. Media consolidation and the financial and political monoliths it creates are ushering in a new era of the robber barons, corporate media elites whose only care is the bottom line. They fear neither legislator, nor commission, nor citizen because they own so much already, they can spin the discussion any way they choose, buy the

influence necessary to write their own rules, and use Americans' own property—the airwaves and the public rights of way—to feed them this pabulum. In the most recent toxic effect of media consolidation the FCC published rules in Media Bureau Docket Number 05311 Video Franchising. In one fell swoop three Commission members overstepped their authority, trampled on the rights of local governments, and crushed the free speech rights of citizens across our nation all at the behest of big media. In this rule-making the three claim that the competition sparked by their rules will result in lower prices, though recent studies in both Chicago and Sacramento, areas that have multiple video service providers for years, show this not to be true. If the Commission had done its homework they would know this. People in Columbus, where there are also multiple video providers, certainly know this. By doing away with operating funds for PEG access above the 5% franchise fee you've cut off the voices of citizens across our nation, preventing them from participating in the electronic marketplace of ideas. But what about the Internet, you may ask. Well as long as Viacom, Disney, and Time-Warner need linear channels to communicate their message, the people will also need their own channels to participate in the discussion. The three claim that this will speed broadband deployment, but give telco's permission to skip over poor and rural areas that they find cost-prohibitive. If they were doing this with their property frankly I wouldn't care. But they're doing it with mine, the public right of way. To use all property that is owned by all of us, they should provide services that benefit all of us, not just the wealthy. This rule-making was illegal, poorly informed, and just plain wrong. Hopefully it will be overturned in the courts, but until that justice is done, we the citizens whose interests you are supposed to represent, will have to live with this, just another toxic effect of media consolidation.

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you. [*applause*]

MELVIN RICHARDSON: To the honorable members of the Federal Communications Commission, greetings to each of you and welcome to the great city of Columbus, Ohio. My name is Dr. Melvin V. Richardson. I am among other things an ordained Baptist minister associated with the Shiloh Baptist Church here in Columbus, the immediate past President of the Columbus Metropolitan Area Church Council, current President of the Greater Columbus Local Religious Programming Council, and host of the television program entitled Good News: A Christian Ecumenical Magazine, which for at least the last four years has been broadcast on the Hallmark Channel, Channel 23 on Tim Warner cable, at 6:30 a.m. on Fridays. The program that I host along with three others, a Christian Science program, a Presbyterian worship service, an African American Baptist worship service also have been made possible by the provision of air time without cost by the Hallmark Channel and Time Warner. Our organization is afforded considerable leeway in selecting the religious programs that are broadcast to the approximately 326,000 customers of Time Warner in the Ohio area. Being I believe correctly informed that Time Warner is the largest media conglomerate in the world, thus I would respectfully request that the Commissioners consider that the degree of media ownership may alone not be determinative of how well they are serving their communities, but rather what efforts, programs, offerings, partnerships, etc. are made available by and through media within communities irrespective of ownership to allow and provide for more inclusive programming that can meet the needs and interests of communities'

viewing publics. We at the Council believe that your inquiry may very well extend beyond the opportunities for diversity in local religious broadcasting within communities.

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

MELVIN RICHARDSON: However we want you to know as our experience with Hallmark and Time Warner and the very positive feelings we have about the opportunities they have provided to offer diversity and local religious programming in Columbus and surrounding areas. Thank you. [*applause*]

JACK BURGESS: My name is Jack Burgess. I'm an educator, writer, and sometime communicator, and most importantly a citizen. Gentlemen, we must have a new Fairness Doctrine. Whatever you do about media ownership, no other media reform will be able to fill the void caused by a lack of fairness in broadcast, radio, and television. As you know in 1987 the FCC rescinded the Fairness Doctrine and we have seen the result—a flood of largely one-sided opinion shows on radio and a standard of slanted program and commentary on television. According to those who favored this deregulation the increasing number of channels on cable and the airwaves would itself provide for diversity and a large measure of fairness. In fact since ownership of stations and networks is almost solely in the hands of wealthy, majority men we ordinary citizens, women, and minorities have had little or no input and essentially no control over programming, news, and editorial opinion. The nature of our society and economic system is such that this is likely to be so for the foreseeable future, and our economic system, absent any

intervention, requires that owners must be motivated primarily by the doctrine of maximization of profit. Commercial stations need not so much the coercion of government as the assistance of government. You have to save them from themselves and save us in the process. We have to have a Fairness Doctrine. Doesn't have to be the same one, could be a new one. *[applause]*

CHARLES TRAYLOR: Charles Traylor, former talk show host with WVKO radio. On the morning of May 2006, after I did my morning show, I was summoned to a meeting by the Chief Restruction Officer for WVKO. AT that meeting the Chief Restruction Officer informed all of staff that he had gotten work from Bernard, Ohio to take the station dark. Bernhard, Ohio did not have ownership of WVKO, neither did the Chief Restruction Officer. That to me was a premature assumption of ownership which should be looked into. It is no secret of how our media has controlled the airwaves. Michael Powell and the conservative right in this country hijacked our media. They hijacked our media. We are really up under government-owned media, because big money, the Rupert Murdochs, they own the media *[applause]*, and they own the big bucks in politics. If you the Commissioners truly believe something—it is very hard to be moved from something if you believe in it—if you truly believe that the airwaves belong to the people, then there is no way in the world in your consciousness that you could possibly make a decision that would further diminish the people's interest in the airwaves. *[applause]* I trust you to make a great decision. I also would urge you to really look into the predatory lending practices of some of these special opportunity funds, such as DB's *[unintelligible]* that sends somebody in to look at financially distressed companies and then circle those

companies like buzzards until the meat falls out off of their skin. I thank you for your time.

CHRIS CLOAK: Judy.

JUDY BELL: I'm Judy Bell from Worthington. That's a suburb of Columbus, Ohio, and I want to thank all of you for giving us your time tonight, being so patient sitting here. I really appreciate it a lot, really. In Columbus we had progressive talk radio, including program feeds from Air America and the Jones Network from September '04 to December '06. It was carried by Clear Channel, 1230 AM radio, and their slogan, which we heard many times every day, was "progressive talk for the rest of us". Well as of two months ago the rest of us were abandoned when Clear Channel pulled the plug on that station's liberal talk format, substituting a conservative format that duplicates what already exists on the company's other stations in Columbus. I'm really angry that I no longer have access to Air America and Jones Network. Clear Channel will probably tell you that progressive talk radio does not draw enough listeners or sponsors. They're wrong. Case in point. Madison, Wisconsin: Clear Channel made their announcement three days after the November election, that's where their side lost, and three days after that they were going to go off. And they... getting flustered. But people organized, and they held a mass meeting, and they gathered signatures, and most of all they did Clear Channel's work for them. They went out and found plenty of sponsors. And you know some of the other things that happened here I can leave out for now. I just want to say that when Columbus went to the Clear Channel office and delivered petitions we were

told to leave the property right away. I have to say, so much for the idea that the public owns the airwaves.

CHRIS CLOAK: I'm going to jump ahead a little. After 39 Chris Goudy will be Number 40, Joe Atzberger Number 41, Carl Kipp Number 42, Kathy Dumas. And now we have Harold Sword.

HAROLD SWORD: Thank you for coming gentlemen. We appreciate you trying to do the right thing. I want to open this with a scripture from James 4:17. It said there is one law giver. I'm sorry, I'm reading the wrong scripture. Anyone who knows how to do the right thing and does not do it commits a sin, the important part of that being the right thing, and I think you gentlemen are doing the right thing by coming here tonight.

Balance: Some might refer to it as a quality. Balance: Some might connect it to fairness.

Balance: Think about that concept please. A question about consolidation: To what end? Corporate nationalism? If the media consolidates further, will advertising costs be lower? Will that produce more jobs? Will consolidation affect other areas in print media and news delivery industry? What will improve with further consolidation? Here in Central Ohio the Dispatch contracts a graphics company that outsources 90 of their jobs to an offshore workplace in India. A few days later that company is sold to another company in Manila, and stories speculate that news rooms will follow are circulated in media. Now you see that chain of events and those dominoes. As competition for advertising dollars sharpens, balance becomes more important because equality and fairness are at stake in all the media, electronic and print. What will be the long-term social cost? Could media

ignore corporate compensation, health care, retirement cost abuse, the balance of income distribution and more? Many feel that is the case as it is. Thank you. *[applause]*

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

KAREEM AL-SABUR: My name is Kareem Al-Sabur. I'm a student. I'm also the future of this nation. I want you to know that right now. I want all three of you to look at me when I say this. This talk two things: religion and economics, the two biggest things I'm concerned about with consolidation is that consolidation would allow one company to play God on this planet, and that's too much power for one company to have on its own. The second things is that with economics. Economics is basically the driving force of this whole economy, of course, I mean whatever, but then again 90% of the driving force of this economy is small business, and what consolidation does is drive out the small markets and local markets, and gives business a free reign to do whatever they want to do, and that's not right.

[introduction of speaker missing] The beginning of part of this problem started with the 80-90 drop-ins, with a lot of small FMs that ended up in markets where they couldn't be sustained, and a lot of those were moved in to major markets. Then came the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which did allow the consolidation, and in this market a company was able to move a station from Marysville to Hilliard under the guise that Hilliard needed its own radio station, which I think that if you were familiar with the Columbus market you would realize that Hilliard very much is a part of this Metro and

didn't need its own radio station. And at one point virtually every rock station in the state of Ohio was owned by one company, and I don't want to bashing that one company, but because their home was here in Ohio it was very easy for them to control a lot of radio stations here. One could drive north on I-75 and hear Buckeye Country all the way from Cincinnati to Toledo with the same disc jockey all the way north. That was the beginning of homogenization and the end of localization. If there's a tornado in the middle of the night in the state of Ohio, there's a possibility that there's not a live jock at a lot of radio stations to ever fire an EAS warning. That is what has happened to broadcasting in the state of Ohio. I would like to say that big media does not recognize that the airwaves are owned by the people. We've already given them HD, and let's not give them anything more. Thank you. [*applause*]

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

JOE ATZBERGER: I am Joe Atzberger and when I was in college I was something of an idealist, and I was lucky to be a general manager at the student radio operation at Ohio State University here. I spent a lot of time on the Commission and its rule-makings and proceedings as I was at the time seeking a license for our operation. I even spent spring break in your archive room if you could believe that, and as any existing broadcaster in Columbus knows and as any aspiring broadcaster will soon find out there are no slots available on that dial for a new radio operation in full power. So I was enthusiastic about the low power initiative of Chairman Kinnard at the time. That rule-making was shot down by legislation that counteracted it. Many of the low power FM stations that would

have been available under that rule making were not available, and in fact in Columbus there were none available. In talking about localism, diversity I viewed your notes here from Los Angeles' meeting and Harrisburg's meetings, and the Commissioners have these three points: competition, localism, and diversity, and I think the way to directly supercharge the effort is to add stations. If there's a restriction imposed by a legislative constraint I would ask the Commission to make that explicit in regard to adding more stations to the radio broadcast dial. Thank you for your time. Thank you for coming to Columbus, and I see that you guys, by your comments, understand the issues. I hope you have the courage to act on them. *[applause]*

CARL KIPP: Hi. My name is Carl Kipp. I'm a conservative, Darwinian, Republican and an engineer, but organic and social environments need to be conserved also. Companies need profits, okay, but the landowners for instance have mineral rights and they get royalties from those. We the people own the wavelengths, the spectrum, and you admit that license renewal has become a rubber stamp. Our payback must include public access and diversity. *[applause]* Now as someone who believes in Darwin and evolution, diversity is the menu from which nature selects. Narrowing ownership loses viewers, readers, diversity. It's bad for us and it's bad for business. Columbus' ersatz newspaper is losing readership because of their narrowed focus. The radio stations likewise. This winds up with the citizenship issue. The consolidation of ownership is remote ownership. This hides local issues, like Representative Bob Ney, who is a paid tool of lobbyist Jack Abramoff, like Tom Noey, the Toledo coin dealer who stole from the state. We had to have Representative John Conyers come down and investigate our elections in 2004. You

Commissioners can help citizens by requiring diversity of ownership, and obviously I'm preaching to the choir. You folks have a good attitude, I can sense. *[applause]* In Italy Silvio Berlusconi, the media owner, was elected Prime Minister. He got good press. In Thailand Thaksin Shinawatra was the media owner and he got elected to Prime Minister. Don't let that happen here in America. Thank you.

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

KATHY DUMAS: Hi. I'm Kathy Dumas from Cincinnati. I'm mostly just a consumer and fan of community media. I also volunteer at a public access center and contribute to public radio, and I'm disappointed with media, big media, in the last ten or fifteen years or so. As a viewer and listener I've seen just a real decline in quality of content. It mostly portrays sort of a homogenous view as we all kind of collectively agree here. So I'm just asking officially: Would you please advocate for more regulation of media ownership? I'm trying to think of what to say. As was mentioned earlier, media can not be treated merely as a product. It isn't merely just a documentation of our culture, although that's important too, but it's such a huge influence in our culture. That's why we really have to safeguard it as a true resource. That's your responsibility. So FCC we need you, and please advocate for that.

KEVIN SMITH: Hi. My name is Kevin Smith. I am a producer of a show called Area 309, which broadcasts at Media Bridges in Cincinnati, and I want to talk about hip hop music, and I want to tell you that there's an impostor throughout the world that's

impostoring itself as hip hop music. This is not what hip hop is all about. When hip hop was formed hip hop was about cooperative economics. Hip hop was about verbal confrontation, not physical confrontation, not violent confrontation. Hip hop was about cooperative relationships between men and women, not the degradation of women, not the degradation of minorities. To paraphrase a famous gladiator, the founders of hip hop had a vision of hip hop and that is not it. But I do a show called Area 309 where we try to preserve the true meaning of hip hop, what hip hop really means. There's shows like Four to Five Minds. There's shows like [*unintelligible*] with Flavor right at Media Bridges that do this every day, every time we turn in a tape. But the introduction of corporate media introduced the violence into the mainstream of hip hop, introduced the degradation of women. It's just another example of how the introduction of corporate media has killed or bastardized a beautiful art form. So what we need you to do as the regulators of the media is to preserve our opportunity to fight back. I know I can't go head up with Universal. I know I can't go head up with Warner, but if you give myself, if you give people like Kevin Williams, if you give people like Lamonte Young our opportunity to just put our version of what true hip hop is and what true media is and do not support the exploitation of our culture we will all be better for it. Thank you.

DARRELL KING: Good evening gentlemen. I want to thank God for allowing you to come today and me and the audience to be here. I'd like to let you know that I'm a pioneer of cable TV. I used to work for Prime Star. I was one of the first ones in the ghetto to bring BET to people, to see their smiles, that black people can see themselves as entertainers, instead of just killers and robbers, but I also want to thank you and make you

consider that Media Bridges is a place people go. They have a safe haven. When we came here we pulled up in the bus, we saw the cameras. My friends said, wow we've got old cameras. We've got old analog things that are outdate. We need digital. We need fund-
ation, not consolidation. and I've come here to tell you to please consider not getting rid of Media Bridges because poor people in the inner cities are looking for places to go, outlets. They're looking for things to do and Media Bridges where I'm from in Cincinnati, Ohio, they give them hope. And also I looked at my manager, Keith, and I tell him sometimes it's hard standing out in the front lines, being from the lower class, trying to look up to big people like you, but I want to let you know that we need your help and please support us. Thank you very much. *[applause]*

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

DOUG TODD: I'm Doug Todd, Number 45.

CHRIS CLOAK: I'm sorry. Go ahead Doug Todd.

DOUG TODD: Okay. My name is Doug Todd and I am an ordinary citizen who has been active in civic and public affairs for several years. You will hear a lot tonight about WTPG, the Clear Channel AM station which changed its format away from progressive talk recently. I have my own personal story about WTPG. I tried to buy advertising from WTPG last October to promote conference on Ohio voting rights. The October weekend of this conference was just a few weeks before the November general election. To

understand the context of this conference, you should know that two major changes in voting rights in Ohio were made effective the first time for last fall's election. These changes were the expansion of absentee voting and new polling place voter ID requirements. There were conflicting court decisions and a great deal of confusion until just days before the polls opened. A major purpose of this voting rights conference was to educate voters and reduce this confusion. My efforts to buy advertising at WTPG for this conference were met with indifference, condescension and in my opinion hostility. I called WTPG about three weeks before the conference believing there was time. The receptionist at the published number for WTPG answered the phone with the call letters WTBN, which is the conservative talk station owned by Clear Channel. featuring Rush Limbaugh. No mention was made of WTPG, but when I asked I was told that the number I reached was also for WTPG. When I reached the sales person they said they would call me back. They did not. After a few days I left at least three messages and voice mails over another two-day period. For days I got no response again. Then finally I got a call back a week later. The sales person who finally called wanted me to buy advertising on WTBN and not WTPG. I told her I only wanted to buy advertising on WTPG and wanted the rates. Finally I got this information, but it taken me nearly two weeks to get it. During this period I sensed a great reluctance on the part of Clear Channel to sell the advertising I wanted to buy on WTPG. I explored the possibility of PSAs for the voting rights conference, and felt the same reluctance. There was absolutely no public interest motivation on the part of Clear Channel to provide the information or coverage of the critical election issues of the voting conference. In these were issues that were of importance to all political spectrums in Central Ohio. The message I got is that Clear

Channel is only in Columbus for the money and has no interest in our local community and public affairs. In the end I felt that getting the spots produced and aired on WTPG

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

DOUG TODD: ... would involve considerably greater effort than I had time to give and I finally looked for other alternatives.

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

DOUG TODD: I have owned two small businesses in the past over a period of twenty years. In all that time I never experienced such a cold reception to my interest in buying ads. Small business people are very busy and do not have the time to work through the kind of resistance I experienced from Clear Channel. Had I been business trying to buy advertising

CHRIS CLOAK: We need to move on.

DOUG TODD: I would have given up on WTPG. Thank you. [*applause*]

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

CRAIG SCHROEDER: I am a member of the several sub-communities the underinsured and noninsured community, the low-income community, the disabled community, and the dissenting/liberal/progressive community in this area in Columbus, and I don't have to tell you I guess that there's a lot of people from that community, from all these communities in the Columbus area who feel like they've been ignored long enough by the media. In 2004 I took part in a huge protest in Canton, Ohio, which is a fraction of the size of Columbus. This is where I'm originally from. When President Bush's tour came through Canton he spoke at the Civic Center in Canton, and I took part in a massive protest that was outside, and we figured between 300 and 500 people showed up for this protest. Canton is a city of about 60,000 people, and if you know anything of what it's like to try to get people out in the streets to protest, it's like pulling teeth. And these people just showed up. There no overarching, no umbrella group that organized this protest, and people were very loud and so forth outside and I was with them. I just wanted to say—I'll make this very brief—that believe it or not we were covered by CNN. I was on CNN for about six seconds. We were good enough for CNN but we weren't good enough for the Canton Repository, the local newspaper in Canton, Ohio who gave us one line and said some Kerry supporters showed up too. The Bush people got four articles on the front page and the second page of the paper with color photos. We got one line that said we were Kerry supporters, and that was it.

JOAN PRICE: Hi. My name is Joan Price and I teach journalism at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, which is a couple of hours down the road from here. First off I would like to express my appreciation to the Commissioners Copps and Adelstein for undertaking

these hearings, both in this incarnation and the last round in 2003 when Chairman Powell sought to relax ownership rules. Today I commend Commissioner McDowell as well for joining in hearing the testimony, for largely it is the testimony of ordinary citizens and their interests which the Federal Communications Commission is charged to protect. Yesterday I encouraged my students to attend these hearings. Why? Because the issue may have more impact on the functioning of our democracy in our country than any other in their lifetimes. We teach journalism in journalism schools that students should seek out diversity in sources, that they should incorporate many viewpoints in their stories, that they should fully understand local issues so they can portray the complexities involved. Should we expect less from a media conglomerate that produces news and from the government body that regulates them than we do from an eighteen year old beginning news writing student? I speak as a journalism professor, but moreover as a citizen in imploring you to reject any relaxation of the media ownership rules, to publish the result of the 2004 draft on localism, and to enact rules that promote localism and diversity. The airwaves belong to the public and having the privilege of these valuable licenses should carry a profound responsibility to the educational, cultural, and civic life of Americans over the commercial interests of a few large corporate entities. Thanks. *[applause]*

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

KENNETH KING: My name is Kenneth King. I'm from Youngstown, and I am a former employee of media properties that at one time were black-owned in the city of Youngstown, which there are no longer. And several years ago we elected a woman to be

the first black City Clerk of Courts, and last year we elected the first black mayor in Youngstown, Ohio. The reason I mention these things is because the media, the radio station I worked for played a huge and very, very significant role in that. When we talk about media ownership, we're talking about things that the media influences such as community businesses, young people, and so on and so forth, who would not have access to media properties or media that is not necessarily community-based, and one of the things that we used to do is we would provide access to local community-based businesses, African American businesses who could not afford rates at traditional radio stations. We would provide avenues for young people to come in and work and become knowledgeable and get first-hand experience in radio if it was something that they wanted to go into. So these were some of the things that we were able to do. So this is the reason why many of us hope in this room tonight that something constructive will come out of these discussions regarding media ownership rules. My final thought is perhaps we may need to consider the First Amendment in terms of freedom of speech as it applies to media, because if things continue going the way that they go, freedom of speech in terms of media will only belong to those who control the airwaves.

STEVE BOEHME: My name is Steve Boehme. I live in Adams County, a rural Appalachian county that's about to lose its only NPR station. To be the only Appalachian county without a clear NPR radio signal will be a shameful setback for our community. It's nothing short of intellectual redlining. NPR is our lifeline to the world of ideas. We're victims of media consolidation. WGUC Cincinnati bought out a competitor, WVXU Cincinnati, along with six satellite repeaters including our local station to form Cincinnati

Public Radio in 2005. FCC granted their request to transfer the station licenses after they pledged to take six specific measures to meet their local service obligations. Cincinnati Public Radio never met any of these requirements. Instead they immediately put all six repeaters up for sale. Our NPR station is sold to Christian Voice of Southern Ohio, a station from Columbus that has already been assessed \$20,000 in fines by FCC for various violations. Christian Voice is now applying for the same transfers and waivers that Cincinnati Public Radio fraudulently obtained two years ago. Cincinnati Public Radio ignored our community. We discovered the sale by accident after the 30-day comment period was almost over. They blamed our community for lack of membership support. Not once did they reach out to any person or group in our county, nor did they follow the FCC's guidelines for public notice. They called our challenge to transfer application a "paperwork delay". Meanwhile they brazenly fundraise in our county, knowing full-well they have no plans to stay. NPR is supposed to be a model of community service. With FCC's permission Cincinnati Public Radio will behave like an arrogant corporate raider. Chainsaw Al Dunlap will be proud. I came here tonight to ask for your help. Thank you.

[applause]

LUCIE POWELL: Hi. My name is Lucie Powell. I'm thirteen years old. I'm from Athens County and I'm concerned about the fact that only a few companies own most of the media. This is my future and I need to know what is going on with the world without a biased opinion. I think that everyone should have a voice to say what their opinion is

because I need different viewpoints to get the whole picture. I'm only thirteen but I do know enough to say that the reason that people want to come to the US is because of the freedom we have. I think that the media should reflect that, the freedom we have to say what we think. Everyone should have an equal say in the media, and if only a few companies control our information that can't be possible. Thank you for thinking about me and the rest of my generation as you make these important decisions on this issue.

[applause]

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you. Obie Lucas, thank you, followed by Robert Harmon.

OBIE LUCAS: Good evening. My name is Obie Lucas. I come as a private citizen, but also as a former employee of WVKU Radio. The reason that I'm here is to discuss what I consider a specific incidence that was very disturbing that to me indicates the total disregard that corporate America as well as predatory lenders have for minority-owned media and minorities in general. On March 3, 2006 as a senior manager on staff at WVKU Radio agents of a company I believe to be Bernhard Radio appeared on scene with a security staff, and seized control of our operation. They forbid me to use any telephones, forbid me to use any computers, forbid me, physically with a security force, restricted me from having access to any of the facilities or office spaces. They unceremoniously informed me that all of the staff members with the exception of two were being terminated effective immediately. Those two were the only two that were not of minority status. *[outcry from audience]* I don't want you to take my word for it. I'm just

wanting to let you know that there was a sense that it took place and I believe that it took place because they felt there was no consequence for those actions. They had no regard for the public interest. They had no regard for the minority-owned interests, and it seems they had no regard for your organization, because they seemed to have no sense that there would be a consequence, because I don't believe they had at that time the authority to do what they did. Don't take my word for it. I'm just putting it out there and seeing if there is something that can be done to explore whether that was the case or not, and if that was the case, there needs to be shown that there's a consequence for such measures being taken. Thank you.

[applause]

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

ROBERT HARMON: Hi. I'm Robert Harmon. Thank you Commissioners for coming to Central Ohio. With the general exception of public broadcasting we here are poorly served by big corporate broadcasters, particularly radio. Radio is largely formula format with large media owners controlling. Clear Channel controls three AM and three FM stations. Sinclair Broadcasting Group controls ABC Channel 6 and Fox Channel 28 out of a single office. Their combined news center broadcasts local news for both channels with a shorter news break on 6 urging viewers to move over to Channel 28 for a longer continuing broadcast. When ABC Nightline broadcasts a program as a memorial to fallen soldiers by reading their names Sinclair refused to carry it. Just before the '04 presidential

election Sinclair announced it would air an anti-Kerry film purportedly for its news value. When protesters organized demonstrations against these actions they were treated shabbily and threatened with arrest for standing by the side of the highway on public right of way. Until recently nightly local news viewers and local employees were forced to endure unwelcome vicious editorials on both stations by Mark Hyman, an officer of Sinclair Broadcasting Group, Broadcasting from an undisclosed location in Maryland. Deservedly they were at the bottom of the ratings. You heard about the Clear Channel switch of formats, taking off progressive radio. They had put it on their low-rated, low power station. You heard the difficulties with advertising. They had listeners. Their ratings were up but they canceled it one day in advance when protests were scheduled, and by the turn of a switch through simultaneous broadcast from 610

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

ROBERT HARMON: on to 1230 so that it's the same programming. This claim that Air America did not produce enough advertisers, perhaps some of this is [*unintelligible*]

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

ROBERT HARMON: its programming by over 90 corporate advertisers, ranging from Allstate to Wal-Mart.

CHRIS CLOAK: We need to move on.

ROBERT HARMON: ... in front of the US Postal Service and the US Navy,

CHRIS CLOAK: We need to move on.

ROBERT HARMON: ... facts of transmitting this policy. I'd like to give it to you. I urge you to roll back... [*applause*]

CHRIS CLOAK: Adnan Mizra, followed by Elizabeth Luesther Holt.

ADNAN MIZRA: Good evening, welcome to Columbus, and thank you for the opportunity here to testify. My name is Adnan Mizra. I'm the Executive Director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations here in Columbus, Ohio. My community, the American Muslim community, is served even less than the disproportionately minority communities here in Columbus and across the US. More so my community is bombarded on a daily basis by bigots who spew their prejudice rhetoric by television, print, radio, and especially now interactive media. This dangerous trend is growing, and as media companies consolidate this disturbing reality will only increase. As media power is concentrated, diverse and varying viewpoints are diminishing. Oppositional viewpoints aren't allowed nor are they even welcome, or so it would appear. Anti-Muslim rhetoric is increasingly largely a part because there is no one to regulate it or keep it in check. Michael Graham in DC, Bill Handel in L.A., Carla Run in Columbus, and Michael Savage in syndication—these are only a few of the names that people are familiar with

that are known people that partake in this type of speech. I fear the day when hate speech is allowed to go unrefuted and runs rampant on our airwaves. Furthermore if things do not change I fear that day may not be too far in the future. How much longer will people have to listen to how Muslim-Americans are unpatriotic, how we are not loyal to our country, how we are trying to undermine the democratic principles that our country was founded on, or how we worship an evil God, or that we are here only as a fifth column? How much longer will we have to hear that we are not welcome here? How long will this type of hate speech be allowed to pollute and corrupt our children and promote and inaccurate stereotypes about American Muslims? Please let me very clear: I'm 100% for freedom of speech, but I am vehemently opposed to hate speech. I'm here today as a father, a proud American citizen, and a representative of the American Muslim community to ask you to stop hate speech on our airwaves and stop the political process that allows this ideological bureaucracy to continue, give the airwaves back to the people, [applause] the record and these people have clearly shown that editors and media moguls will not do this on their own and they have left the audience...

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

ADNAN MIZRA: ... they serve a long time ago so that they could line their pockets with corporate dollars. We ask you not to let that be the case. Thank you for your time. [applause]

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

ELIBATETH LUESTHER HOLT: *[introduction cut]* ... by being the watchdog of government and society. Some examples would be Edward R. Murrow, Ida Tarbelle, Upton Sinclair, even photojournalist Margaret Burke White. Woodward and Bernstein accomplished in the recent year the exposure of wrongdoing. I trusted the objectivity of media, that is until about 2003, when my casual interest in politics as a social studies teacher became wild obsession, because I finally realized that remarks by the current Chief Executive clearly contradicted previous remarks that he had made, and yet no one in the media noted that. It clearly became a situation of the emperor having no clothes and I got angry. Imagine my relief when WTPG, a station with progressive programming, came onto the airwaves. I listened to it from Day 1. True, it was owned by Clear Channel. However I hoped that the station had realized that progressives are consumers too, but my experience with WTPG showed that that was not the case. When I tried to contact people at the radio station it was almost impossible to find a contact name. Once I found a contact name and e-mailed that person I never received a reply. I finally toured the station because I had bought an ad, and I found that the station, WTPG, consisted of a taping center that merely relayed programming. Even today when trying to find information about Clear Channel on the Internet it was nearly impossible to find any information, and that makes me angry. I know that Clear Channel owns 1,200 stations across the country, which averages 24 per state, and most of those stations are high power stations. I have friends and relatives who live in rural and exurban areas who have access only to channels like FOX and the Clear Channel stations. No wonder the majority of the Western states went red in 2004. All they heard was FOX and Clear Channel, and that

makes me angry. I plead with you to mandate a balance of views and personalities who appear on stations and that stations that portray themselves as fair and balanced actually follow that policy, and that interviewers who portray themselves as journalists be journalists, instead of name-callers and hate-mongers.

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

ELIBATETH LUESTHER HOLT: When I hear that a woman speaking in front of an organization at which the Vice President is in attendance and she calls a presidential candidate a faggot and she is applauded, ...

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

ELIBATETH LUESTHER HOLT: ... I get angry. This must stop. [*applause*]

CHRIS CLOAK: I'm going to read ahead a little bit. After Number 59 Marty Kuhn is Number 60 Mark Butler, Number 61 Justin Jeffre, and Number 62 Willis Brown. David Mezera.

DAVID MEZERA: Hi. My name is David Mezera and I'm the owner of an Internet service provider company in Dayton, Ohio called Donet. Seven years ago there were eleven locally-owned ISPs in Dayton, Ohio. Now there's only two, and my company with 2,300 customers is the largest of the two. The rest belong to two Fortune 50 companies.

No matter what broadcast medium you consider the core issue is access to bandwidth. Bandwidth is the essential ingredient of communication. Media consolidation is clearly a concern as we have heard here tonight, but media convergence has more and more services like phone, television, podcasts, etc. move to the Internet, the importance of meaningful network neutrality becomes key. Network neutrality wasn't an issue for my company twelve years ago when we started, but the lack of it is becoming a growing problem for us today in two ways. first way, we've seen major carriers block access to email and digital phone services hosted by competing companies including my own, and when that happens it costs me customers. Second way, our local major carrier is making it more difficult to provide services. When the major carrier sells DSL directly to the consumer at a lower price than he sells it to a reseller like Donet at a "wholesale price", we just can't compete. Their pricing is below cost. The same telco that can block access to a competitor's email server or digital found can also block access to web sites or Internet radio channels. If diversity of voices and having more choices in the marketplace are truly important then network neutrality rules for the companies who have access to our public rights of way is equally important. Thank you. [*applause*]

MELVIN JOURNIETTE: Hello. My name is Melvin Journiette. I'm a citizen and resident here in Columbus, Ohio. So welcome to my city. I just live a few blocks from here as a matter of fact. As far as Channel 4 NBC, Channel 6 ABC, Channel 28 FOX, and Channel 10 CBS here in Columbus, Ohio, the inner city representations of the so-called local channels are only murders, fires, rapes, and your occasional tragedy. There's nothing else going on here in Columbus. [*laughter*] I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired

[*applause*] of only the worst of my neighborhoods and the worst of my neighbors being portrayed in these media. I live here and I know better. It's time the media reflect what I know. I understand directly and in real ways what an ignorant by deficient media can do to a community, my community here in inner city Columbus, here in the Near East and downtown area. In particular in my area you have Children's Hospital. They single-handedly dismantled our neighborhood by taking over our park, our grocery store, and our historic housing. They're tearing it down, when they didn't do any zoning or anything. Everything in the local media and in this situation only promotes the goodness of Children's Hospital. You got the commercials that show people who donate to the hospital. They never question whether not what they do is beneficial to the whole region compared to Cincinnati or Pittsburgh or whatever. It's only about how good they are. So I'm against the strangulation of public assets to the Internet by AT&T, by Time Warner, and we need high-speed viable Internet service providers like was just said. We have to buy from one and that's it, and they jacked the price up and we have to deal with it. And about music, diverse hip hop, the current media refused anything more than the misogynistic and violent rap when there are true urban poets who can express love and the real beauty of life. But corporate America and the corporate media don't give you that. Sinclair Communications which is FOX 28 and 6, you get Good Day Columbus, and all they do is advertise for either channel. They don't give us anything but drivel. No news.

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you. We need to move on.

MELVIN JOURNIETTE: Okay, thank you. [*applause*]

MARTY KUHN: Hi. Thanks for coming. I'm Marty Kuhn and prior to the 2004 election I stumbled on talking progressive, WTPG. I knew it was a Clear Channel station so I was skeptical, providing my understanding was that they were kind of conservative, but I was thrilled also being progressive, and it was more enlightening to listen to fun Stephanie Miller instead of mean Rush Limbaugh, or to hear progressive Christian—not an oxymoron—Jim Wallace discuss poverty issues, instead of hearing Jerry Falwell talk about which political leaders should be assassinated in other countries. [*laughter*] So I saw no promotions though, and when I talked to people about the station they hadn't heard of it, and I heard commercials I couldn't respond to. I don't need a metal building, I don't have erectile dysfunction, and I'm not losing my hair. So much for market research. I've also learned about potential progressive talk advertisers who couldn't get call backs when they were trying to initiate the purchase of an ad, so I started wondering if they were setting up the station to fail. Why would they do this? Well maybe they had more to gain by retaining the status quo than by adding one more station to their vast ownership. Maybe the key was to beat the competition or the opposition was to control it, kill it through neglect, and then say that the market won't support it. Regardless of what their pain was, obviously the station had some impact because the 2006 elections proved it, and almost immediately afterward coincidentally, Clear Channel started dropping progressive format all over the country, replacing it with anything but, and in some cases after dropping the format they then increased the power of the stations. So I know this maybe isn't a political agenda here. There are both sides being represented, but I think

obviously some of the stations have a political agenda. They're willing to fall on the sword to support it. Thank you. *[applause]*

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you. Number 60, Mark Butler.

MARK BUTLER: Yes, good evening. Before I speak I want to make sure I'm seeing right. I said right, not white, but right. Now we're talking about diversity and I want to send up or lift something up. As I look at the panel I do not see any diversity. *[applause]* Okay, now I'm going to go on to what I've written. I'll be brief, and I'm used to doing this because it reminds me of an audition for a play. Again my name is Mark Butler and I'm an independent, faith-based television producer. Recently I was denied approval for a program that I produce which reflects a segment of the faith-based community. That is the performing arts culture. Time Warner said to me that Mr. Butler, we have no space for your type of program. My question is Commissioners, if I could send you a DVD and maybe have your recommendation, if my program, which I think is very diverse, and it will meet the needs of the local faith based community in Columbus Ohio. Understand this is somewhat, maybe, well its not offensive I'm going to make it plain, its not about the profit, I'm not talking really just profit I'm mean profit meaning money, its not about, what do you call, try to organize something to try to help a nation, I want to make it plain, it's about people. That's the p word that needs to be emphasized in this recent organizational buying up everything because you have more keys in your pocket and don't care about the people. Thank you. *[applause]*

WILLIS BROWN: Good evening, I'm Willis Brown president of the King Lincoln Brownsville neighborhood association, which we want to welcome you to, this is our area, and we are proud that you're here doing this. We have people coming from all over to voice there concerns about the media. And we want to go to one step closer than the media. We have a African American mayor, who's Democrat, we have an all Democrat council and they both condone and remove the non agenda items that were spoken at city council from the people. It's not televised anymore. Now your talking about a problem in our own democracy when you have a mayor and council agreeing to remove public access to the people, so the citizens cannot speak to other citizens but you can hear agenda items, things that they are pushing for their agenda. But you see color is not the issue here its all the economics who's funding them and so forth. So we as a civic association have several issues that deal with the economics of our residents. And we have schools that are being built in our neighborhood that don't even use the residents. But do you even hear about that in the media? So therefore we have to say, how is it that a black Democratic mayor with an all Democratic city council can condone and put in place the removal and maintain that the removal of public access from the city council chambers to the citizens of this city. And we are saying we hope that you can do something and for the people that are here, write to the mayor, call the mayor and call city council and say you want to hear what other citizens are saying in the non-agenda items. And if you want to do something do that tomorrow. Because we're going to continue until we get that back on the air. Thank you.

[applause]

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

DANA MOESNER: Good evening everybody. Dana Moessner with the King Lincoln Brownsville Neighborhood Association. I'm the Zoning Development Chairman and as we all know, all politics are local, another thing to remember, in this city the Mayor Coleman, the papers, the dispatch, City Council, like to promote grassroots. Everybody likes grassroots. When the grass roots come out of the ground and grow grass they chop them off at the neck. We are an example of that. We have dealt with City Council, we have been down there continually for the past four years. 2004 December 13th in City Council, we had an hour and a half discussion on a property two blocks from here at Hamilton and Long. The mayor sat in City Council that whole hour and a half. He's never in City Council, that night he was. The Dispatch was there and they reported what happened. The only this is the next morning when you read in the Dispatch, they told the city's point of view, they didn't talk to us from the neighborhood, they talked to somebody else who lived on the east side but not in the neighborhood. The Dispatch reporter who covers City Council every week for some reason wasn't there that week. They had somebody else. And their excuse was, "we didn't know who to talk to". How can that be? There was an hour and a half discussion including those of us who live in the neighborhood. Now that is strange. And that's not the only time. The Dispatch newspaper who is very close with Mayor Coleman has frequently called us community. They know our name, King Lincoln Brownsville Neighborhood Association. We've had private meetings with Mayor Coleman, we've had private meetings with City Council members, we attend City Council, we do this in City Council almost every week. And for a year,

almost two years, they didn't know our name. We were just community people. Now excuse me Dispatcher, we want fair and equitable treatment. And this is a problem on the east side. Children's Hospital, ran over the east last week in City Council. Thank you.

DON UTTER: Good Evening. My name is Don Utter from Worthington Ohio. My major concern is the future of our democracy. Democracy is a form of government that's able to work on complex problems like designing an education system to produce citizens. I worry about our democracy every day for what's happened during the last six years and now the loss of our worldwide reputation which will never be regained. Without the active support of the mainstream media we probably would not have fallen for the lies used to justify the invasion of Iraq. Our constitution puts the press in an exalted position because of the essential role they need to play. Our concentrated media has not held itself accountable for the high percentage of Americans, maybe 70% at sometimes, who believe the falsehood that Al Qaida and Saddam Hussein were linked. I seldom listened to the radio until the Air America came to town. I really appreciated the depth of their coverage of issues and how they followed issues over time. As you know Clear Channel has taken over and it's not on the air. Now that 63% of Americans think that going to Iraq was the wrong decision, we don't even have the support of the major position of our country much less a minor position. Yesterday Scooter Libby, assistant to both Cheney and Bush, was convicted of obstruction of justice and lying. The investigation took four years with one of our best prosecutors. This was our celebration of our democracy but it also shows how hard it is for citizens to find out what's going on when the top of the

government is dedicated to secrecy and propaganda. This is why we need the media doing their job. Final comment...

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

DON UTTER: ...final comment. This hearing this evening has given me hope in democracy. I want to thank all of you and I want to thank all the people who came. Thank you.

ROSEMARY PRATER: Good evening and thank you. I'm distressed this evening. I've had an opportunity to come and meet you. I said I'm very distressed this evening. And I'm sad to think that first it was fighting to read and right then it what fighting to vote and yet we're standing in another line to be heard, to protect our democracy. Our freedom that you said belongs to us, I'm just wondering weather or not I shouldn't ask for your job descriptions, and whether or not we don't have displayed before us today another Walter Reed situation. My concern as a community activist and resident of Columbus, Ohio, and a developer and co-chairperson of the old town east town hall meetings as well as the collaboration of communities about getting, informing our communities, getting the information out as we try to build it. Now all that had to be done because of the lack of communications, but I must say, and give kudos to the WVKO, the only radio station for people of color that had an opportunity to express and exchange and stay abreast of one another. My concerns are that as Percy Squire has done a wonderful job in that, and one of the host of Front Street lines, Charles Trailer, and I must also add someone to work

very hard to keep communications out was Judas Powell, one of our leading activists here in the state of Ohio. My concern is why is it taking so long? I mean I really concur with everything that's been said this evening, but why is it taking so long, and when will there be a resolve? And where will it come from? We realize this is economically driven and I believe that it has been well planned and orchestrated. Because what has happened, it is driving and drying up the black community, particularly across the country, not just here in the state of Ohio. *[applause]*

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

ROSEMARY PRATER: I am asking you, as I concur with the previous, those that have previously testified to. No I'm not begging for you, I'm demanding for you to give resolve! We don't have to beg. Thank you. *[applause]*

CHRIS CLOAK: Greg Hoke will be followed by Bosra Mohamed, Shane Lampman and Mark Brown.

GREG HOKE: I'm Greg Hoke. I'm an educator and I'm a resident of Columbus, and as an educator I teach computer networking and computer programming, and each semester when I get a new crop of students, I'm amazed, to this day, many of them don't have wideband Internet access. And I hope that one thing that you will do, is to recommend that Congress mandate that we have a plan to have wideband Internet access to every household in the United States, whether it's rural or urban or in between. And, so, besides

my role as a teacher I've also been a moveon.org organizer. In 2004 I was present when John Conyers came to town and investigated the mishandling of the elections of 2004 in Ohio, and I was very pleased when Stephanie Miller was on the air as I was driving home from city hall, and now of course, everyone's mentioning how AM 1230 has been removed. I just wanted to make the point that it's really expensive to set up a radio station. Hundreds of thousands of dollars, antennas, transmitters and 40,000 dollars a month for operating expenses, this is very expensive. And if you think that it's only economics that drives this, your mistaken. Thank you. The Washington Times in D.C. gets tens of millions of dollars infused per year to push their ideology on the American people. And, I guess what I want to say is, in MoveOn, on February 9th, the Dispatch had published an article saying that Senator Voinovich had signed a letter opposing the escalation in Iraq. We organized a rally at Senator Voinovich's office with veterans who would speak, and actually had a couple of them in January 24th, the Ohio News Network came out, but on February 22nd, despite the fact that one of Senator Voinovich's aides had spent a whole hour with me on the telephone—his name was Chris Pollots—not one member of the media came to our second demonstration.

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

GREG HOKE: And what we feel is that Senator Voinovich says one thing and the media presents a view, yes he opposes John Bolton before the vote comes up...

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you we need to move on...

GREG HOKE: ...but then he votes for him...he opposes the escalation but when it comes to a vote he votes to keep the war going, so anyway, we need to have fair media that represents the interest of the diverse community of Columbus. [*applause*]

SHANE LAMPMAN: My name is Shane Lampman, I'm a concerned citizen, and the only thing I as a citizen can rely on when I turn on the news is that I'm unlikely to be informed of anything relevant. For the last few weeks the airwaves have been dominated by the death of Anna Nicole Smith. Now hers is a sad and dramatic story deserving perhaps a very brief mention on the news followed by a relegation to the entertainment media. But therein lies the problem. As massive corporations have taken control of the media it has all become entertainment media, and the social obligation to inform the public is no longer acknowledged, replaced by an obligation only to advertisers and shareholders at the expense of public awareness. The words of Larry Maze, CEO of Clear Channel, owner of over one thousand radio stations including six here in Columbus, bear repeating for their refreshingly unambiguous yet disturbing candor. "We're not in the business of providing news and information, we're simply in the business of selling our customers products." Now this statement, by a man with an obscene amount of control over public discourse, should not surprise anyone. But we must admit the obvious, this attitude and the impulse to further relax ownership rules is entirely antithetical to democracy. Democracy is dependent upon a diverse range of perspectives and ideas and only in the realm of the absurd could one accept the notion that it is not diversity but a narrow adherence to the philosophy that to the victor belongs the spoils that truly defines

a healthy democracy. In that environment of unfettered consolidation, the best we can hope for is choice, the illusion of freedom. Like the choice when we tune in to our local news broadcast on the ABC affiliate, or thanks to duopoly, the same broadcast on our Fox affiliate. Inevitably, we lack all choice, as in the case of the Columbus Dispatch, our only daily newspaper which cannot possibly, and does not, fulfill the information needs of this diverse community. This is not a healthy democracy and I urge you to do the right thing, and, as Commissioner Copps said, "win on defense and go on offense, because we need your help". Than you again and thank you Free Press and all those who came out today. *[applause]*

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

MARK STONE: My name is Mark Stone and I am an American citizen. I'm here to express my concern about the ownership of media outlets. The only way I can be informed about what issues and events that are occurring in America is through a satellite service that I have to pay for, and that's to receive Link TV and Free Speech TV and that's how I can receive Democracy Now. Had I not chosen to watch these programs and this program, I'd be sitting at home happily watching the boob tube totally unaware of the real issues that are threatening our democracy today. I believe broadcast media has become limbol, if that's a word, meaning that all media outlets have become ditto heads. *[laughter]* The local and national media merely restate non-issues such as the Anna Nicole situation, which has been previously addressed and I apologize. When all media is controlled by major corporations, we do not hear dissenting viewpoints. We get

manufactured, fabricated news, stories that are presented as real news. We all get misinformation. As someone stated earlier, those in control of the media, control the message. This reminds me of the book burning that occurred in Nazi Germany when Hitler was on his rise to power to build his dream of the Third Reich. Will we as citizens, learn from errors of the past, when people are told what to read, what to watch and what to think? Thank you for your time. [*applause*]

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

PATRICIA MARIDA: My name is Patricia Marida. I'm a volunteer with the Central Ohio Sierra Club and with the Ohio Sierra Club and our organization like many others would like to hear more of it's voice coming over the media. There's a crisis in American democracy. Corporations have highly undemocratic control of the information put out to the public over their vast networks. The media barely questions our President Bush's decisions after September 11, 2001. though millions of Americans knew, I repeat, they knew that these claims of weapons of mass destruction were extremely questionable. We knew that the International Atomic Energy Agency had the capability, and was working to inspect and document Iraq's nuclear capability. Why couldn't we get our opinion onto the mass media? And look where this censorship has led our nation. Little coverage of peace rallies occurred here locally either and when media did show up there did not seem to be any coverage later on the news. So media consolidation is the exact opposite of democracy. Corporations are now backing a scheme to take away the democracy of the Internet by keeping nonprofit and small organizations out of the fast track. And I'm

wondering how this can pass the straight face test with the FCC Commissioners. These media giants make enormous profits publicizing ads for political candidates. A huge percentage of the funds donated by citizens to candidates is spent on media advertising. So essentially as citizens promoting candidates, we are lining the pockets of the media, and because these ads are so lucrative the media are reluctant to pay to play any information news about the candidates because this would be in direct conflict with their advertising dollars. And I want to say a couple of things. Columbus lost it's only public access TV station a few years ago and we want it back, and lastly I want to say that the advertising is really the scourge of the airwaves, we're forced to listen to this, you know, why do have to listen to this corporate propaganda? It's all too closely linked to the content of the news as well. Thank you. [*applause*]

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

LES STANSBERRY: Good evening I'm Reverend Les Stansberry. President, Pastor and President of the Interfaith Association of Central Ohio. But since the Pastor from this congregation had to leave, I wanted to at least welcome you as a Presbyterian. It happens that the congregation I served, Old First Church, over the 60s, before I was there in 1875 started this congregation. So in a sense I can welcome you to the congregation. Thank you. Now, in the Interfaith Association of Central Ohio, our eight member faiths, Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Islamic, Jain, Jewish and Sikh. We rely on the local media to announce our programs and invite the wider community to participate. These faiths would be touched by a national conglomerate but the nuances about their activities in

local community would be lost. Aside from this concern I want to share my fear—this is more personal—of the imposition on interests from a distant city. For example, this past weekend on the front page of the Dispatch, we had the news about fighting Unlimited. It's brought in and sold more tickets than any other activity from Rolling Stones to public hockey games. The interests, the gambling interests of Las Vegas, brought it to town for us. Now we know gambling interests are moving in on all the small towns across the country, but we in Columbus, need to have somebody other than Las Vegas entertaining us. [*applause*] Thank you.

MERRILYN SHREFFLER: I'm Marilyn Shreffler. I'm a Presbyterian, a senior citizen and I do volunteer, particularly in Church Women United and the Metropolitan Area Church Council. But I speak for the rules which allow more small businesses to own and control the airwaves, the publishing companies and the Internet. Two of my beloved airwaves are NPR and PBS. They have many solid programs of classical music, of news programs that are in depth, thoughtful analyses from local to worldwide. And I've heard of large conglomerates like Verizon and AT&T that they want to control the Internet. No no no no. I mean, I pay both of them for my cell phone and my telephone and so forth, but I don't want them to be controlling the Internet. I don't want them to be controlling the airwaves. I see that 5% of TV stations are owned by women. Why not 20% or 30%? That Latino owned stations do not serve the majority of Latino homes, that African American homes are generally not served by African American stations, Asian American stations are not served by Asian stations. My hope is, for our country, that we have more access to free speech. When the conglomerates own the stations we lose our free speech.

So, and I also am against selling off more stations to large corporations, my son in law thinks that's great because it's going to make money for America, but who's going to get the money? I believe in the free speech many, many, many possibilities. I run away from those three major channels and I can't handle all the noise, the violence, the accidents and everything. I hurry over to PBS and I get some real solid stuff. Thank you very much.
[applause]

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

JAMES MINNERY: My name is James Minnery, I'm a Vietnam veteran from Aleary, Ohio. It's about thirty miles west of Cleveland. In 1964 I was 21 years old, that's the year the Gulf of Tonkin incident, supposedly that gave us an excuse to kill 58,000 Americans and hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese. I'm here because I'm concerned about the continued existence of the United States of America. In the recent past, most of the mainstream media has been a propaganda outlet for a corrupt, dishonest, murderous US administration. I believe the mainstream media is an accomplice in the murder of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis and 3,000 American marines and soldiers. Even public radio has been adversely controlled by this corrupt administration. The mainstream media told us the following lies: we were told Saddam Hussein had a connection to the 911 attack. Even after the President admitted there was no connection, 40% of Americans believed it to be true. We were told Saddam had weapons of mass destruction. None were found, but Republicans at Fox news have America still believing it. Why does Fox News still have a license to lie? [applause] They sold us this catastrophe in Iraq. That's a

rhetorical question. It's because Bush and Cheney, that's their personal propaganda outlet. We were told we should nuclear attack Iran because they may get nuclear weapons some day and attack Israel. The slaughter of Palestinians and Lebanese is minimized. Arabs and Muslims are subhuman according to some on the media. This is the reason why we have an endless global war on terror. Furthermore, we were told that Jimmy Carter is an anti-Semite, plagiarist, Nazi sympathizer. He's the best President I've known as far as integrity.

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you James.

JAMES MINNERY: Thank you.

MARK BROWN: Hello gentleman, I'm Mark Brown with the Congressional Policy Form. Previously I've been a Congressional candidate here in Central Ohio. Briefly I want to touch on, as an hourly construction worker running against the fourth ranking incumbent House member in the dominant party, I got 33% and then 40% of the vote, where typically a well-financed candidate of my party got 28, and that's because I had superior policies. My difficulty was, I had difficulty reaching the voters. People I reached generally voted for me. In Europe equal access to the television and radio is typical and standard and I think if that were the case in the United States our Congress members wouldn't have spend 50% of their time begging money and they could do some homework and learn about issues and challenge which would have a chance to be elected. Something which is often ignored, that perhaps you would deal with I the United States

federal government sponsors the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, Radio Free Asia in various outlets over seas. The public knows little of them, and it's very important to community groups and the public have access, that their news be broadcast over these stations, that they not be run through filters of political correctness and I would like to see you work to open up the access these stations, to the general public so the world knows what our active democracy is like. And I think that would pretty well cover my issues. One other thing real quick is the idea of offshore broadcasting, where there would be people in the oceans, offshore, whether in the US or overseas broadcasting. And I don't know if that's something that you would look into in terms of the regulation of it in terms of national and international law, because I know there would be lots of groups which would like to broadcast, not only in the US but overseas. Thank you.

CARRY SADOPHIN: Hi, I'm Carry Sadophin and I'm an investigator and I am also a coordinator for Military Families Speak Out of Ohio, which is a nonpartisan organization of more than 3,000 military families opposed to the war in Iraq. As a criminal justice professional and military mom of a reservist in the National Guard I have major concerns regarding a lack of balanced coverage in the lead-up to the war in Iraq. I believe it was in part the media's coverage which encouraged the war, specifically irresponsible pre-war reporting. Without a fairness doctrine in place to protect news consumers from inaccurate news sources, what can or will the FCC do to hold corporate-owned media accountable when they fail to tell the truth and people are hurt or killed as a result? Why isn't propaganda-like programming considered a licensing violation since they are the only business covered by the First Amendment? I would also like to state that in November of

2006 military families gathered in Washington, DC from all over the country to let the public awareness know that military families exist who do not support the war in Iraq. But there was no media in attendance.

[*name of speaker unknown*] Good evening, thank you for being here and for listening so patiently. I represent a grassroots nonprofit organization, Simply Living, whose 800 members hold a vision to create a compassionate sustainable world through personal community and cultural transformation. Our media, using our airwaves, powerfully shapes our culture and our world. We want a voice in that media. To that end we are one of five original applicants for a low power FM license here locally, contrary to what somebody said previously. Together we five organizations jumped through the hoop of becoming a time share, receiving our construction permit in October of '05, although one partner's application has been dismissed without any explanation. In our time share agreement, we had identified three tower sites that would bring LPFM to the eastern portions of this county. We are now weeks away from being on the air but already two of those three towers sites have been negated due to FCC approval for a full power FM commercial station to move into the market. Given current FCC rules, our one remaining tower site at any time could be silenced no matter how much time, money and sweat equity we invest, or how much the community may come to value us. These rules give greater value to for-profit radio than to radio that is fully committed to serving our community. We call on the FCC to make rules that reflect our cry from localism for community ownership, for a media in which our voices can sing out with our rich cultural

diversity and a multitude of view points that reflect our birthright that isn't involved in free speech. Thank you.

DARTANGNAN HILL: My name is Dartangnan Hill I'm a member of Men for the Movement. we're an organization determined and dedicated to changing the quality and conditions of our neighborhoods. I'm also a former and founding member of the Deuce Deuce Bloods in Columbus, Ohio. Yes I said founding member of the Bloods but also said former. In 2001 I was tried and convicted of a crime I didn't commit and sentenced to 24r years in prison. The media, Channel 4, 6 and 10 and the Columbus Dispatch did over twenty stories on my situation. Some of you might be familiar with it. They reported every night telling viewers and readers to beware of the mailman. My charges consisted of home invasion, robbery, aggravated robbery, aggravated burglary and participating in gang activities. The robber was wearing a mailman suit. Headlines read "Mailman Robber", also "Local Gang Leader Gets 24Years in Prison". In 2005 my conviction was overturned based on exculpatory evidence. There was no coverage on my release, and still hasn't been to this day, except for the Call and Post and a local show on 107.5 called Street Soldiers which is aired Sunday seven to nine. Had it not been for these shows, I believe I would not be standing here before the FCC and citizens of Columbus and local, surrounding areas. My life was very much in danger because in the urban community, only snitches get out of jail early, especially twenty years early. So I feel it's important to have localism and diversity in all media outlets.

TIM PRAY: My name is Tim Pray, I'm a public school teacher. Recently on CSPAN I saw the Secretary of Agriculture talking about flora that he had run throughout the country and how much it informed the agriculture bill that is going to be before Congress this year. And I'm hopeful and it just seems like really good government, and I appreciate you truly, I appreciate you being here. I'm very optimistic. Unfortunately, I report a nightmare scenario. So put an asterisk by this one. This past congressional election here in the 15th district, here in Ohio, Debra Price, the incumbent, was in a very close election with democrat Mary Joe Kilroy. Late last summer moveon.org, the progressive, you know, group, wanted to put on one of their red handed ads they had been running against candidates that they didn't support all throughout the country. Some of them are pretty specious and some of them are pretty well on. Time Warner, my cable company, said that they would not run the ad. Now they're not even a network, but they're my cable company, they're my ISP from Roadrunner, and they want to be my phone company, or so they tell me everyday in the mail. *[laughter]* I called Time Warner and they said that they would have somebody call me back. Someone called me back, an anonymous executive named Carmen, and she said that they had been threatened with a lawsuit by the Price campaign. I thought that was ludicrous that the responsibility for the contents of an ad are the campaign's. I called the Price campaign and talked to their campaign manager who was very forthright and said we wrote them a letter asking them not to do anything about it, but we asked them not to run the ad but we have no grounds for a lawsuit and that was never a communication. So their representation was that they were threatened with a lawsuit, therefore my cable company becomes my psychological prophylactic to not get this information. I don't want that from my cable company...

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you

TIM PRAY: I don't want it from my ISP and I certainly don't want it from my phone company. Thank you.

CECIL AHAD: My name is Cecil Ahad and I want to thank you men for coming out here and I really didn't think the FCC cared but from hearing you gentlemen, I feel your heart and I feel that you do care. I want to talk about losing WVKO and what it did by taking away a voice and a spirit from people that allowed people, the black community, to talk, and in a way to communicate and discuss the problems that's affecting the black community and try to find ways to solve it and working together. All that was happening and by losing WVKO it hurt a lot of people and people now it's just, its like there's just loss, we don't have no voice, no... [*applause*] ...there's nothing there for us. When you turn on the television in the morning here in Columbus more than not you're going to hear shooting last night. "Black male shot in the head, young black male shot multiple times, young black males shot in the chest, suspect, young black male, young black males". They show this constantly, constantly. They don't show the terror and the destruction in the community where this is all happening at though. They don't show that, how people are terrorized. But they show Iraq, they show Indonesia, Africa, India, where there's oppression and suffering and murder and terrible all the time, but its happening right here in this country. But they don't show that. We need the army here patrolling our streets. And this is not being shown. Women, young women, children, they live in fear.

Every day. And I even, going further to say, you know, this affects, if this was going on, blacks killing blacks, whites killing whites the way blacks are killing blacks, there would be a stop put to it. It would not go on. It doesn't happen in Dublin and Hilliard. This kind of stuff does not happen, but it happens in the inner cities here. No one sees that. No one hears helicopters and sirens and gun shots every night. So we need to show this. Attention needs to be brought to America. And not all this money, and we're spending money to fund the wars to fight in all these countries...

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you

CECIL AHAD: ...and we need to do it here. [*applause*]

LEONARD SAMUELSON: I'm here to advocate strongly for a diverse media environment in which the marketplace of ideas carries a multitude of voices in order to help inform my decisions as citizens and members of this society. I strongly encourage the FCC to consider the value of enabling dynamism in the media marketplace to allow a plurality of voices to be heard. I am concerned by the current direction of our media marketplace away from dynamic and broad information flow toward a decreasing number of increasingly powerful organizations. We depend on information from a variety of sources to help us choose among the paths we take and the decisions we make. We depend on the media, whose capacity for investigation into the issues of our time far exceeds our own. We depend, therefore on the aggregated strength of these diverse voices to help inform us. Limitations on media ownership concentration are a well-

established precedent, having been replaced for decades, to prevent the well known negative effects that result from manipulation by too few players with too much power. At present the media marketplace exemplifies this pattern of a few dominant players and many minor players. Furthermore, the dominant players seem to be acting in concert to freeze out independent organizations that have recently arisen to counterbalance the current orthodoxy. In the last few decades the media corporations have gained enough power to begin influencing our representatives in government for the express purpose of further dominating the marketplace. Thank you. *[applause]*

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you. Number 86 is Teresa, 87, Earnest, still not here, Denyse is 88, KellyAnne Kinnslow is 89.

TERESA BLAKELY: My name is Teresa Blakely. I began to track mainstream media's avoidance of issues of relevance to citizens in response to its appalling lack of attention to the danger posed to our democracy by notoriously fraud-friendly electronic voting machines. I am here this evening, first of all to state, that the needs of politically progressive citizens are not served in the Columbus market. I believe Air America Radio was well received but was not given a chance to develop the sponsorship that could sustain it. I believe Clear Channel failed its public service mandate to provide for diversity when they pulled Columbus' only progressive talk radio station to replace it with another right wing radio station. The media conglomerates do not pay for the privilege of using our public airwaves. I ask that the FCC either begin charging those who lease our airwaves or move rigorously to enforce the station owners mandate to

serve local and diverse communities. *[applause]* Throughout history we have relied on a diverse media to serve as watchdogs of industry and government. When there are more media voices, the likelihood that they could all be compromised or corrupted is diminished. I am particularly outraged by what I see as big media's new low of mandating the broadcast of propaganda, attacking the party that does not support media consolidation ahead of critical national elections. I am referring to Sinclair Broadcasting introducing anti-Kerry propaganda ahead of the 2004 election and to ABC's factually inaccurate docudrama, A Path to 911, ahead of the 2006 elections. Big media and Bush Republicans have merged in an unprecedented way in order to manipulate our elections. *[applause]* When a corporation uses its media control to promote the election of the political party that supports its bottom line, that is corruption masquerading as free speech. *[applause]* Corporate influence peddling poses a threats...

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

TERESA BLAKELY: ...of Orwellian proportion when the corporation that's buying influence is the information industry central to the health of our democracy.

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

TERESA BLAKELY: That's it. *[applause]*

CHRIS CLOAK: Juanita Brown and then Denyse.

JUANITA BROWN: I'd like to say hello and especially to Mr. Copps because, excuse me, I've seen him numerous times on CSPAN and I know him to be genuinely concerned about this problem. However, here in Ohio in 2004, a terrible crime was committed. It involved the electronic voting machines. And the lady previously spoke briefly about it, I was the victim of one of those machines. I know it to be true that there was some shenanigans going on here in Ohio. To get media to cover it was dismissed as a conspiracy. With the help of WVKO and a couple of very courageous lawyers, Bob Ferchakas and Cliff Barnabeck, *[applause]* we were able to get the information out. And if we don't have the media and if we don't have the vote we have nothing. So that's all I have to say. *[applause]*

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you. Let me read ahead several names because we're actually getting close to the end. So, 89 Kellyanne Kinnslow, 90 Anthony Hodge, 91 Bob Fitrakes, 92 Steve Rodggenkamp, then we're starting over again with number 5 Paul Kay, 6 Sue Simon, and 7 Mike Majeski.

DENYSE DUBRUEG: Hello I'm Denyse DuBrueg. I'm an inventor and I was the first presenter of digital television to the FCC in January 1990 in the Orlando meeting of the FCC in conjunction with the American Broadcast Association. I presented some technology that was some eight times better resolution than what was made exclusive for HDTV. And I find in my watching HDTV and signal satellite downloading that their technology is far inferior to what my company would have offered. I would like to have

the FCC consider opening the opportunities to E3TV, which is my invention, has signals that can be carried and recorded and stored on HDTV equipment. We also can downplay our resolution so that HDTV sets can play our signal. I have a description here on one page that will give you an idea of what it is and I'm certain that we should be in the records of the HDTV deliberations since I made two presentations, one in January 1990 and one in April of '92 or 3—I'm not sure which. But, anyway, I was just squeezed out by international and national large corporations. I think that what we have to offer will be more appropriate and give broader choices for education, for science, for medicine and it should help specific applications much finer than what HDTV can do because that's just a little broader with not much increase in resolution. And now we have China and Japan, we have, I think we import 90% of our HDTV at this point.

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

DENYSE DUBRUEG: So we would offer a national production of very high quality television. Thank you.

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you. We have Kellyanne Kinnslow, Anthony Hodge, Bob Fitakes, [*applause*] followed by Steve Rodggenkamp, Sue Simon, Mike Majesty, Cliff Arnebeck, and Harvey Wasserman.

BOB FITRAKES: All right. My name is Bob Fitakes, I'm a professor, I'm also the editor of the freepress.org Columbus Free Press and I'm a Near East Area commissioner in this

area. I think in many ways my life has paralleled the demise of broadcast TV and radio in this country. I started in ten watt college radio. Virtually all of those low powered college stations are gone. But they were libertarian in nature, there was a marketplace of idea often replaced by classical music that pleases donors. With that gone of course, in the 80s the fairness doctrine left us equal time provisions, the growth of these tremendously large corporations. I did regular NPR and public radio commentary until Newt Gingrich and his crowd took over in Congress and then from going from being on the radio a couple times a month I went on for being on twice in ten years. I was then on WTVN for a while. I was an award winning journalist. At that point I said there was corruption in the Bureau of Workers Comp. in Ohio in 1997. All of that led to massive corruption charges against Tom Nowe and money laundering in the campaign. When I raised that on the radio, on Bob Conner's show, I was told by corporate headquarters I wasn't entertaining enough to be on Clear Channel radio and I was booted off with those stories. Then of course what happened and what began to happen in that process, I went on WVKO, ten years on black radio. That was taken off the air. Then I went to WTPG and did 10,000 dollars worth of advertising and then I said, look we need local broadcasting here. They said despite ten years I wasn't qualified enough and then gave shows to people with no radio experience on WTBN, and wouldn't return a call when we attempted to buy the TV time to put on local programming. The airwaves belong to the people! And it's about time that we destroy this monopoly and these oligarchs that are owning and controlling. I don't believe diversity is scanning the political spectrum from ultra conservatives...

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you Bob.

BOB FITRAKES: to neo-fascism. And we need other voices and we need them now.

Thank you. [*applause*]

CHRIS CLOAK: I'm sorry, Steve? Okay. followed by Paul Kay, Sue Simon, Mike Majesty, Cliff Arnebeck, and Harvey Wasserman. Wow. There's a red cell phone that's missing somewhere and if you find it could you please take it out to the lobby.

STEVE ROGGENKAMP: Thanks. What an act to follow. Thanks for coming past the Potomac, coming to Columbus, Ohio, and giving the average citizen the opportunity to address the Commissioners. I strongly support diversity in the media, equal access to the Internet, but I have little to add to the comments provided by other speakers tonight. I want to speak tonight to something that I feel is equally important with the media. I encourage the FCC to take back the airwaves for US citizens. Specifically I would like the FCC to require licensed media to provide prime air time for all certified candidates in an election before an election, say 30 to 60 days. The exact rules can be worked out by the interested parties. Already we are being asked to donate to 2008 presidential candidates while the first contests are still almost a year away. The reason given for these requests is the high cost of media advertising. Now I want elected officials to represent us, the average citizens, not prostitute themselves hunting for bucks. Providing free air time should reduce the cost of campaigns. Hopefully more viewpoints will be aired and encourage more candidates to run. Maybe it will even start real discussions of the issues. To me this is one of the most important issues that faces our republic today. I've never

run for office. I don't have any intention of running for office, but I'm tired of seeing politicians selling themselves so they can buy media time. Thank you. [*applause*]

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you. Steve. Paul? And do we have Sue? Thank you. And Mike? Go ahead Paul.

PAUL KAY: Good evening gentlemen. Thank you very much for being here. My name is Paul Kay. I'm going to be pretty brief. I failed public speaking, just so you know that. I'm very interested in the Fairness Doctrine. I think we should bring it back, but I would go one step further. I want to talk a little about the truth and honesty in the broadcast media. There's a lot of people like the right-wing media, the Limbaughs, the Foxes, whoever. There doesn't seem to be any kind of control over what they... Sometimes it's just misinformation, half truths, but then there's boldface lies. I would like to see a fine on, hey, this is not a fact, this is a lie, and you should be fined for it. [*applause*] Now I don't know if you guys can do that. The other types of things are NPR and PBS are very good. At the same token the Administration once again announced cutting more funds to PBS/NPR. They don't want any kind of viable truth out there. In the meantime, on the other hand, we give \$500 million [*unintelligible*] to a Pat Robertson on the 700 Club. I don't know. I just don't get it. I guess I'm pretty much done. Do I have anything else? I was also a progressive radio fan. They replaced, you know you've heard this ten million times tonight, this guy Savage—he's the guy who said something about supposedly got fired on the West Coast for saying—he hopes that gays would all get AIDS and die. I

think that's a worse thing to be said on the air than anything Howard Stern ever said.
Thank you very much.

SUE SIMON: My name is Sue Simon and I'm a seeker of the truth. The public interest should be determined by the interaction of millions of diverse interests and actors in a free marketplace. Let me read it again. The public interest should be determined by the interaction of millions of diverse interests and actors in a free marketplace. I once read this: Truth is the first casualty of war. Truth is the first casualty of war. Now I say this: Truth is the first casualty of a consolidated media. *[applause]* Truth is the first casualty of a consolidated media. How can we know the truth when we are exposed to so few voices? I challenge you also to be seekers of truth. *[applause]*

CLIFF ARNEBECK: My name is Cliff Arnebeck and I'm on the board of Common Cause, Ohio, one of the sponsoring organizations. And first I'd like to acknowledge the extraordinary contribution that each of you gentlemen has made to the public interest by being here for this town meeting and really going beyond *[applause]* the call of duty, and it's something I've never seen on the part of a commission, and I particularly want to thank you for the fact that this is a bipartisan participation of your Commission. Laissez faire, consolidation—we've tried these things before and they didn't work. That's not the judgment of one party. It's the judgment of both our major parties. Theodore Roosevelt rejected these things and engaged in trust-busting. Franklin Roosevelt rejected these things and created the New Deal. The vision that they had is that of Adam Smith, the ideal of a free market with many small competing firms to achieve consumer sovereignty.

Also the vision of Joseph Schumpeter of the entrepreneur's ability to revolutionize markets, to achieve better products and services. Monopoly corrupts, not just markets, but politics. Surely that's what Dwight Eisenhower was warning us about when he talked about the threat of the military-industrial complex. The monopolist's objective is freedom to extort monopoly profit, not the public interest or consumer sovereignty. In the tradition of Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin Roosevelt we would ask you to protect, restore, extend the public interest regulation designed to achieve truly competitive markets, diversity, entrepreneurship, localism, truth, and the American way. Thank you very much.

[applause]

CHRIS CLOAK: Thank you.

MILES CURTIS: Harvey actually had to go home. My name is Miles Curtis. I'm speaking for him. *[laughter]* I've worked in college radio, run a couple of record labels, I play in a band, worked at newspapers. So I'm inside and outside as a viewer, and I just want to say a few things. Net neutrality, number one, high priority. Please do not mess up the Internet. Please do not. And then it doesn't bother me so much if CNN wants to spend all day talking about Anna Nicole, but when they crush out other people's outlets? I mean there's other people working on zines. There's Tom Tomorrow, *[unintelligible]* stopped carrying him. That wasn't so much of a problem. How do I find Tom Tomorrow? This is the guy I want to read. Where's he at? I cannot find alternate sources unless I've built it

myself or one of my friends does it for me, and there needs to be, not so much anything you have to do, but you can't allow companies to get bigger and bigger and bigger and take up all the resources and all the outlets because the rest of us need jobs too. That's all.
[applause]

CHRIS CLOAK: Let me thank you all for your cooperation and help today. I said about three hours and fifteen minutes ago that we might be able to make it by 10:30, and it's about 10:35. So we couldn't have done it without your support here. So first of all, thanks for turning out. Second of all, thanks for helping out. Let's also thank again the Commissioners. [applause] Let me ask the Commissioners if they'd like to make some final comments.

COMMISSIONER COPPS: I don't know if this is working or not. Can you hear me? Thank you so much Columbus. Thank you for the people who stayed this late. Thank you for everybody who was here earlier. I think you have really given us informed and articulate presentations and perspectives. Frankly what we've heard here reflects a lot of what we have heard around the country with this concern for consolidation and some of its effects. I'll just say in parting I hope you will see this as the beginning of the road to reform, the beginning of the road to action, not the end of the dialog. You've expressed your concerns beautifully here tonight. I hope everyone will express them in their neighborhoods and in their towns and city and using every vehicle you possibly can, if we're going to translate this into something positive. You have helped us understand

much better tonight, and we thank you for that and thank you for your hospitality.

[applause]

COMMISSIONER ADELSTEIN: I want to join in thanking you all for coming out and participating and sharing with us your views of what's going on here. I have learned a lot. I must say that the comments and the wisdom we heard tonight was enormous. There was a lot of sophistication, a lot of knowledge, a lot of insight, and really almost a unanimous concern about consolidation and I must say that we're going to have to take this back to Washington and act on it. So thank you for expressing yourselves. Thank you for being here.

COMMISSIONER MCDOWELL: Well I don't want to repeat what's been said. I've been taking notes. I don't know if anyone has any ice for my hand. I don't think I've written that much since the bar exam many, many moons ago. But thank you all very, very much for coming out, for expressing your opinions, for being so succinct, and I know that's hard to have just those two minutes slices. That's why I was writing it down so we don't forget, and also many, many thanks to those who provided paper to us. This is not the end of the road. Feel free to email us as well. You can find all of our web sites at FCC.gov. So thank you all very much. Thank you Columbus and have a great evening everybody.

[applause]

